ON THIS MONTH'S EXCLUSIVE DEMO CD

CD CONTENT CORRECT AT THE TIME GOING TO PRESS

9 ESSENTIAL PLAYSTATION DEMOS

SHADOW MAN • PUMA STREET SOCCER • KKND: KROSSFIRE • NEED FOR SPEED: ROAD CHALLENGE
TOTAL DRIVIN' (PLATINUM) • FUTURE COP LAPD 2100 • FORSAKEN • STREET SK8TER • BIG AIR SNOWBOARDING

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STATION

AFTER DYING... KILLING IS EASY!

shadow man

Sometimes, it takes a KILLER to stop a KILLER.
Exclusive PAL preview and rolling demo of Acclaim's Dark Prophecy.

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STAR WARS
EPISODE ONE

The Phantom Menace has come - we can feel its presence...

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

OMEGA BOOST
PRINCE NASEEM BOXING
DINO CRISIS
AIRONAUTS
SPEED FREAKS
PUMA STREET SOCCER
EVIL ZONE
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June 1999

Volume 1 Issue 9

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9 Summer Is Round And Black

Summer has once again graced us with plenitude. We here at STATION are slavishly toiling on future issues, motivated by the occasional crack of a whip from Dazza as we write tirelessly and fetch him endless chocolate drinks.

We long to see the sun, to feel the warmth of the outside world restoring us to health. This is where you, vital reader, can aid us in our plight. You must play and enjoy this superlative cover-mounted CD. Play it for us so we don't feel so bad about being stuck in the office when the weather is clement. Your pleasure is ours.

ON THIS MONTH'S 9 FREE DEMO DISC

PLAYABLE DEMO

FORSAKEN

TOTAL DRIVIN'

PUMA STREET SOCCER

KKND KROSSFIRE

FUTURE COP: LAPD 2100

ROLLING VIDEO

SHADOW MAN

STREET SK8TER

BIG AIR SNOWBOARDING

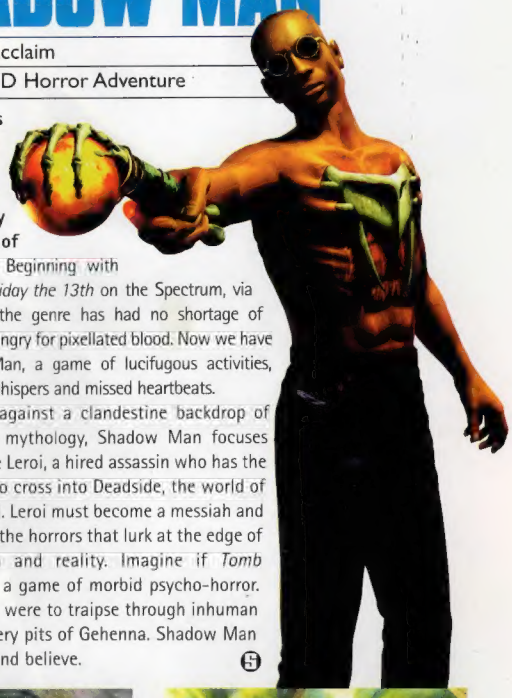
NEED FOR SPEED RC

ROLLING VIDEO

SHADOW MAN

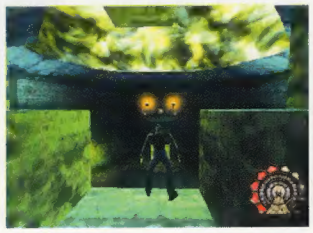
PUBLISHER: Acclaim

GAME TYPE: 3D Horror Adventure



For years gamers have been hungry for a taste of the macabre in games, fuelled by midnight readings of Lovecraft and Poe. Beginning with games such as *Friday the 13th* on the Spectrum, via *Resident Evil*, the genre has had no shortage of followers, hungry for pixellated blood. Now we have Shadow Man, a game of lucifugous activities, hushed whispers and missed heartbeats.

Set against a clandestine backdrop of voodoo mythology, Shadow Man focuses on Mike Leroi, a hired assassin who has the ability to cross into Deadside, the world of the dead. Leroi must become a messiah and confront the horrors that lurk at the edge of perception and reality. Imagine if *Tomb Raider* were a game of morbid psycho-horror. Imagine if Lara were to traipse through inhuman terrain from the very pits of Gehenna. Shadow Man is that game. Watch and believe.



PLAYABLE DEMO

FORSAKEN

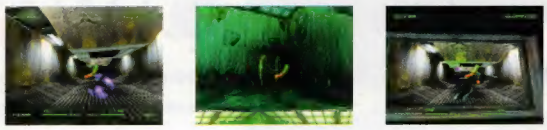
PUBLISHER: Acclaim

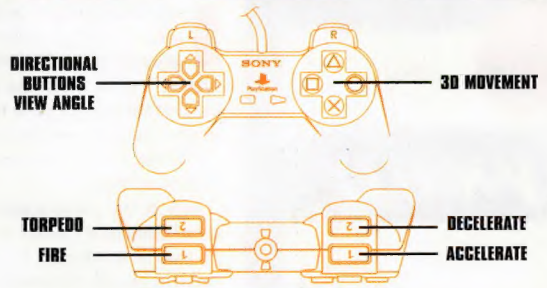
GAME TYPE: Futuristic 3D Shooter

Hello, welcome to the future. Tasteless and radioactive snacks with fallout-ridden condiments will be made available for you at a grotesquely inflated price.

In the future of Forsaken, though, humanity has all but decimated itself in the quest to harness the pure powers of the universe. Don't they realise that only He-Man can do that? The husk of the earth has become fertile ground for roaming bounty hunters and mercenaries. Sat astride powerful and heavily armed anti-gravity pioncycles, they battle to the death for the valuable last resources of barren earth.

Forsaken manages to combine elements of *WipEout* and *Doom*, fusing them in an original style that won the hearts of many a gamer with fluid playability, frantic combat and magnificent lighting effects. This demo gives you a tester of the hyper-action as you veer your pioncycle through claustrophobic caverns, ever alert for interlopers to reduce to a bloody pulp. Weapons have three increments of power and can be boosted by grabbing the pods that litter the level. The fun comes from working out what each weapon does, and who are we to deprive you of such a pleasure?





PLAYABLE DEMO

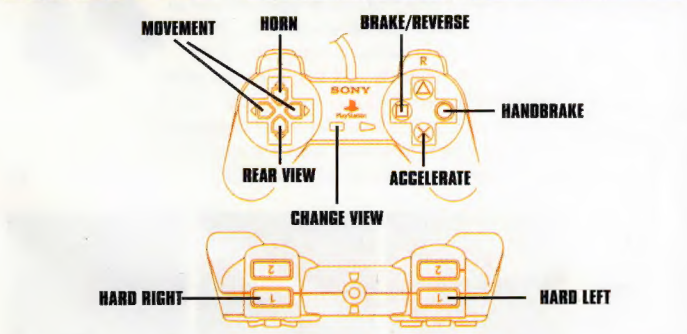
TOTAL DRIVIN'

PUBLISHER: Infogrames

GAME TYPE: Racing Sim

Brmmmmmm, meeeawwwwww, screeeeeeee! Such are the vocal emissions of most people playing racing games, especially when motivated by several pints of intoxicating liquor. And it's much safer than proper drink driving, which can lead to crashes and being reunited with your internal organs as they erupt from your anus.

Total Drivin' has variation. It may not have a 'g' in the title, where one is obviously required, but it has variety. In the game proper, you don't simply choose a car, you plump for an entire team. With five racing classes, that allows you over 40 different cars to abuse as you wish, surely the kind of number to give even Jeremy Clarkson a soggy nocturnal emission or two. Tracks span the world and have no crash barriers, so wandering off into the sea or ravines can become commonplace, not to mention costly for the team in question. It may not have quite the sophistication of *Gran Turismo*, but will certainly pass away a few of this summer's rainy afternoons.

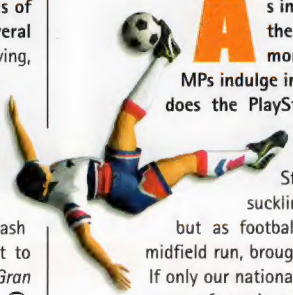


PLAYABLE DEMO

PUMA STREET SOCCER

PUBLISHER: Infogrames

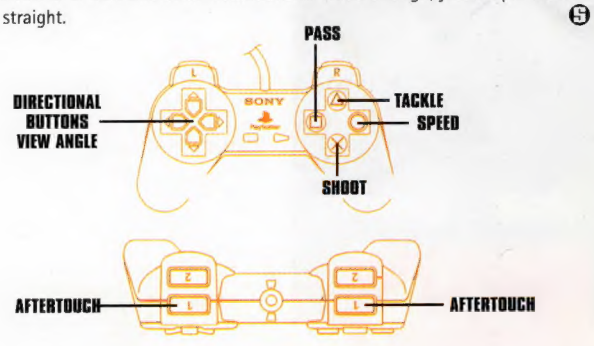
GAME TYPE: Football Sim



As inevitably as the sun rises in the morn and backbench MPs indulge in acts of sexual deviancy, so does the PlayStation gain another football game to its already ponderous brood. Puma Street Soccer may have missed suckling from the teat of originality, but as football games go, it makes a fair midfield run, brought down in the box by *ISS '98*.

If only our national sport was kabaddi. We could at least then enjoy countless games of men in nappies running around with no discernible purpose, chanting 'kabaddi kabaddi kabaddi' like a mantra.

Puma Street Soccer is, quite literally, street soccer. Play takes place on various urban/ghetto pitches, smaller than the conventional football pitch, making for some tight and controlled games. Also unusual is the fact that each team only has five players, a fact that you'll doubtless have ascertained yourself in the playing. Stat-loathers will be delighted to hear that Puma Street Soccer is designed to be more of an 'arcade' experience. There are no swathes of text and team formations to wade through, just simple football action, damn straight.



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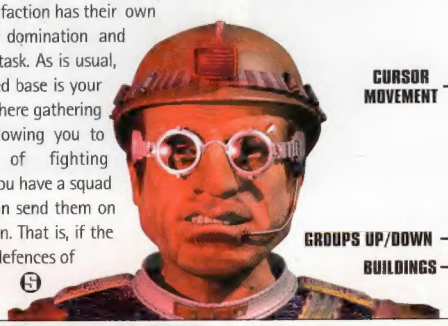
ON THIS MONTH'S FREE DEMO DISC

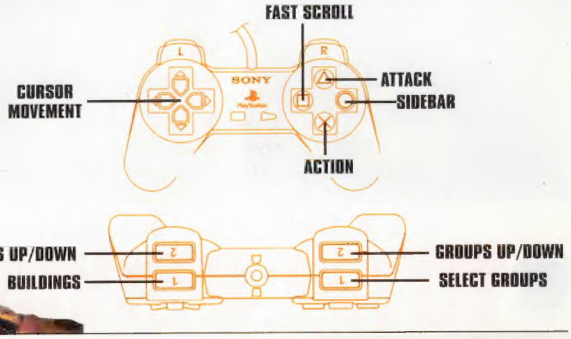
PLAYABLE DEMO
KKND KROSSFIRE

PUBLISHER: Infogrames
GAME TYPE: Strategy

If we mention Command & Conquer now, it dispenses with the need to make comparisons throughout this whole spiel. Yes, KKND Krossfire may as well have the subtitle '100% Command & Conquer clone', but such contrast hinders the game from being assessed on its own merits. Imagine how John Lennon's son must feel.

Without imitation there can be no evolution, so clones are, in a convoluted manner, favourable for the continuity of a genre. Enough of this poncey academic shite, however. What of the game? Curiously, it's almost as if the plot-mother spawned out the plots for Krossfire and *Forsaken* in the same cycle. KKND is a Darwinist struggle for survival against predators in a land of limited resources; a microcosm of life, if you will. The game is as vast as the vacuum between Jo Guest's ears, boasting over fifty missions, dispersed over three 'species': survivors, mutants and sentient robots. Each faction has their own reasons for seeking domination and making it so is your task. As is usual, establishing a fortified base is your initial priority. From there gathering oil is imperative, allowing you to produce legions of fighting automatons. When you have a squad large enough, you can send them on a sortie of destruction. That is, if the enemy haven't built defences of their own... S

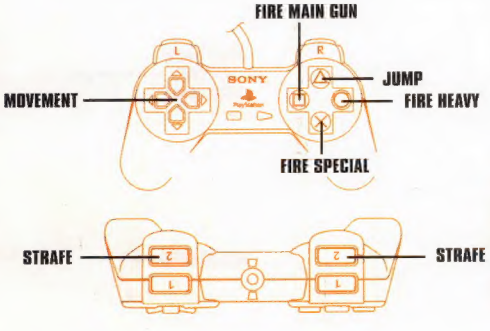


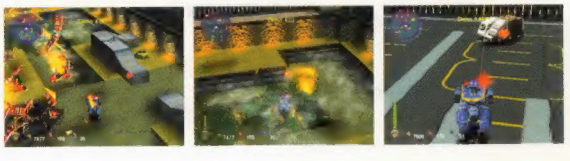


PLAYABLE DEMO
FUTURE COP LAPD 2100

PUBLISHER: EA
GAME TYPE: Futuristic Shooter

Once, twice, three times a lady or, in the case of this CD, three times a post-apocalyptic future. Indeed, Future Cop supposes a dark future, a place bereft of hope, brimming with despair and riddled with the cancer of crime – rather like Exeter on a Saturday night. As the events in this game transpire on Earth, there's precious little chance of calling in the G-Police, what with them being too busy flouncing around on Callisto. Luckily, in true James Bond style, you have some versatile and potent resources at your disposal. In 2100, the criminals are cunning, ruthless and technologically advanced. You have to walk their walk or rapidly become an ex-rozzer. The mech-machine you control is able to transform between a hover-car (reminiscent of the police cars in *Blade Runner*) and a bipedal death machine with more firepower than several small guerilla states. Future Cop LAPD 2100 is an unrelenting orgy of gun-fuelled carnage, peppered with some sumptuous graphics and dazzling lighting effects. Don't just take our word for it, play the demo and kill for justice. S





ROLLING VIDEO

STREET SK8TER

PUBLISHER: EA

GAME TYPE: Skateboarding Sim

There must be an undiscovered gene that becomes active during adolescence; a gene that turns otherwise pleasant, polite children into skaters. Suddenly they talk in a vulgate, using arcane words such as 'rad' and 'ollie'. Not to mention the greasy hair and almost symbiotic closeness to a piece of wood with wheels on. Generally speaking, genitalia are positioned in the most appropriate places, and most of us would do all in our power to keep them there. Skateboarders, however, have little regard for their juiceman, endangering it daily with their precarious stunts. It may look cool to propel a skateboard over perilously high obstacles, but if you shatter several bones in the process and lodge said skateboard firmly in your groin, vomiting and humiliation is all that will ensue.

Street Sk8ter allows you to avoid all that agony by pulling off these insane stunts from the relative safety of your favourite chair. Our rolling demo will prove to you just how much we at STATION care about your safety; buy the game and keep your sperm count high.

ROLLING VIDEO

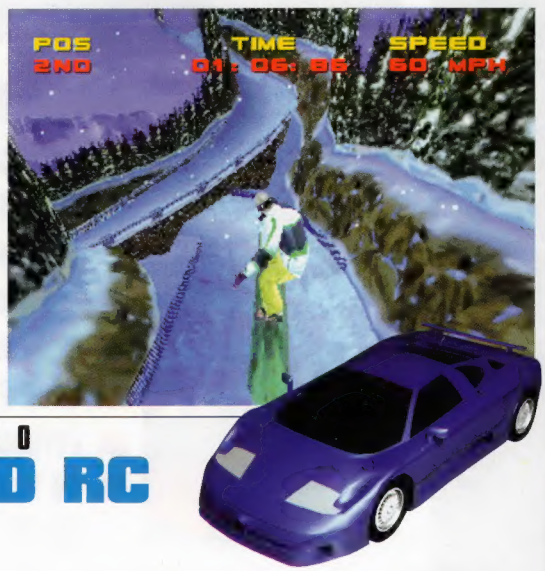
BIG AIR SNOWBOARDING

PUBLISHER: EA

GAME TYPE: Snowboarding Sim

In terms of conceptual titles, Big Air is prone to suffer the curse of the double entendre: Man one: 'I've got Big Air'. Man two: 'Then stay the hell away from me you flatulent orifice of effluvium'. You get the picture...

Still staying at gutter level, there are almost as many PlayStation snowboarding titles as there are farts in the world, and most of them reek as noxiously. Big Air did the almost impossible; it gained the interest of the usually cynical STATION boys. Why is this phenomenon so? Check out the rolling demo and judge for yourself. Big Air offers the trimmings that are essential for a snowboarding game to retain its credentials: complicated and potentially damaging tricks, half-pipe, big air jumps and numerous tracks down which to ostentatiously flaunt your prowess as the fakie king. STATION will accept no responsibility for any occurring loss of vocabulary and use of words such as 'gnarly' caused by this demo. We are mitigated.



ROLLING VIDEO

NEED FOR SPEED RC

PUBLISHER: EA

GAME TYPE: Driving Sim

One of the agonies of journalism is repetition. From Pole Position to Gran Turismo 2, the aim of virtually driving a car at speed has always appealed to the gaming psyche; especially the male one. Must be a compensation thing. As our smart roller shows you, Need For Speed Road Challenge is no slug in the performance department, playing well with smooth graphics and elegant handling. Another distinct feature is the Hot Pursuit mode, allowing you to play as a road-bound cop, chasing down speed-freaks in a cinematic manner. Naturally, the game is outstripped by the large fish in the increasingly shrinking pond of racing game tolerance, yet Need For Speed Road Challenge just makes the grade as 'fairly good'.

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WWF Attitude

Now contains over 40 of your favourite WWF superstars, all photo realistic with real-life face characteristics. Featuring all-new motion captured manoeuvres by the premier wrestlers, the ability to customise your wrestler's moves from your favourite superstars and three brand new arena environments. With over 20 game modes including previously unseen speciality matches, 'WWF Attitude' slams its competitors into the ropes.

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Street Fighter Alpha 3

From the Alpha branch of the Street Fighter tree, 'Street Fighter Alpha 3' has several completely new features as well as tweaked existing ones. Customise your favourite characters in World Tour mode, possibly the best new touch of the game. Here you can travel the world dishing out excessive physicality in any country that can offer an opponent. Includes all the characters from the Street Fighter series plus new, hidden characters to battle it out against some of the most detailed backdrops to grace the fighting scene.

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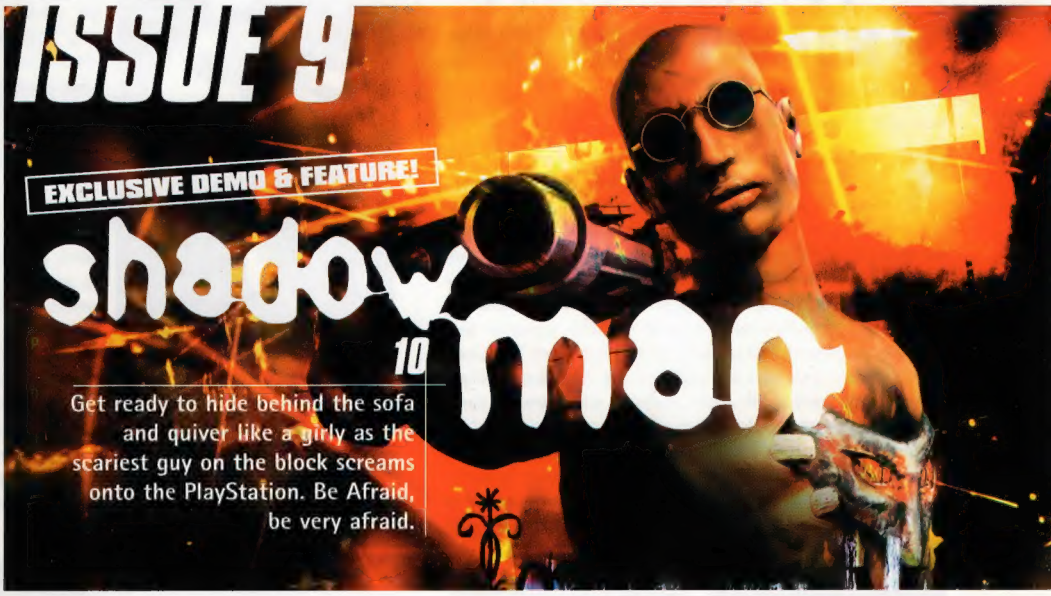
EXCLUSIVE DEMO & FEATURE!
shadow man 10
Get ready to hide behind the sofa and quiver like a girly as the scariest guy on the block screams onto the PlayStation. Be Afraid, be very afraid.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

30. Dino Crisis
32. Star Wars: Episode One
34. Aironauts
35. Carmageddon
36. Evil Zone
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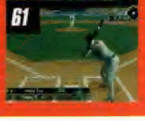

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JUNE 1999

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EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!
OMEGA BOOST
46
What would you expect from the makers of Gran Turismo? The best looking shooter yet, of course.

FEATURES

18. PocketStation
It's certainly not the new Game Boy, so what is this jumped up memory card's raison d'être?

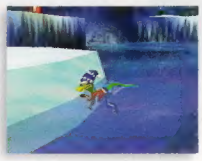
22. Bite The Wax Tadpole
Why is it that while the rest of the world is happy with safe normal games, the Japanese spend their hard earned yen on fishing and locomotive simulations? We investigate.

94. When The Lights Go Out
The power's down, so there will be no videogames tonight. Go get a strange bunch of friends and a selection of boardgames and see what happens...

THE EDGE

70. By Any Means Necessary
You're cheating aren't you, don't lie I can see you...

76. Gex: Deep Cover Gecko Guide
The little green fella is cracked open (metaphorically) and all his secrets come oozing out.



90. R-Type Delta Guide
Space shooter blasted to bring you a universe of help.

62. Rockin' Riders
63. Final Fantasy Collection
63. Last Blade
63. Kitty The Kool
64. Chocobo Racing
64. Legends Of Legaia
65. Lightning Slash
65. Microman

65. Septentrion
66. Freestyle Boardin'
66. Nectaris
67. Pepsi Man
67. Air Race Championship

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VOODOOSLAVE

He showed up in a town a few years back, didn't have a name, didn't have a past.

With all the inane bad press being discharged upon the videogames industry recently (predominantly in the whacko 'States, strangely enough), it seems only apt that STATION 10 features the macabre and blood-chilling Shadow Man. Acclaim's voodoo epic boasts sequences more disturbing than anything seen in a videogame to date. Need convincing? Just take a peek at the exclusive rolling demo we've perniciously acquired!

Staying Stateside – I'll be flying out to LA for E3, the Electronics Entertainment Expo. Fresh and interesting titles being launched include: a Planet Of The Apes licence, a Wu-Tang Clan beat 'em-up, and hopefully a new Tomb Raider title. Full report next issue.

Killing Is Easy!

DAZZA • Darren Herridge – Editor

WORDS, PICTURES AND VIDEOGAMES

4. On The Disc
Oh, what great delights we have to show you...

18. STATION Nation
You tell us what you think and we reply in a condescending (Nick) or sarcastic (Kendall) fashion.

88. Industry Directory
How to contact the suits and faceless people in power.

108. Monitor
Lara goes to bed with Lucozade, and much more lovely stuff.

108. No More Polygons
All elements of popular culture dissected and studied for your amusement.

112. Inside
Sainsburys stock console titles, Titus unveil future plans.

114. Charts and Price Check
What's up and what's down on the high street.

The Unbearable Darkness of

A CLOYING AND NIGHTMARISH DARKNESS IS ABOUT TO ENGULF THE PLAYSTATION, AND NONE OF US ARE EVER GOING TO LOOK AT TEDDY BEARS IN THE SAME WAY AGAIN.

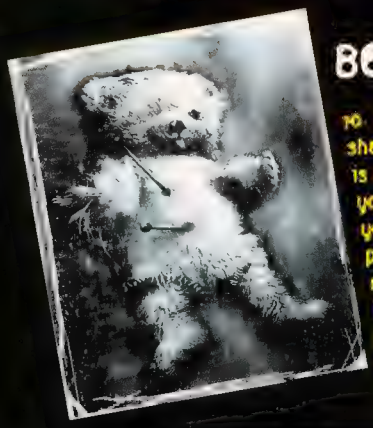
A less reputable legend has it that when a human dies, his or her essence goes not to Heaven and a date with a harp, but instead travels to a parallel necro-world which goes by the highly apt name of Deadside. Inside this weird realm stands The Asylum, a monolithic mile-high building whose apparent purpose is to house the dear departed souls of the very worst monsters that mankind has spawned over the ages: the serial-killing, child-murdering creatures whose acts are so steeped in evil that they must be kept isolated from the rest of the dead, if only for their own safety. However, unknown to the deceased population, the true purpose of this grim edifice is far more sinister, if such a thing seems possible...

The horror, the horror...

Based upon the comic book series of the same name, Shadow Man is without doubt the darkest and most twisted title to grace the PlayStation yet. Fear and horror in computer games have a long and understandably chequered history (see our in-depth feature in issue 4 for proof), but only in the 32bit era have developers had the depth of resolution and graphical potential to really make our stomachs churn. In recent times, the Resident Evil series has brought Day of the Dead splatter to our joypads, while Silent Hill followed a more insidious James Herbert approach – heavy on the dread and nasty-minded shocks. Shadow Man has those same two qualities in spades, but raises the psychological stakes to new confrontational levels that will inevitably have concerned parents reaching hurriedly for their pens in outrage and disgust. →

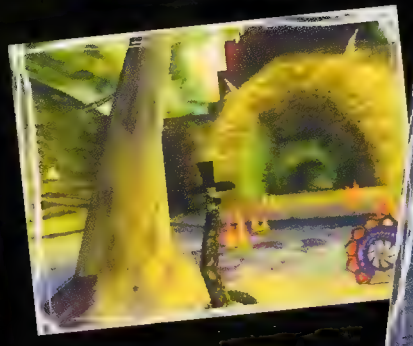
Being

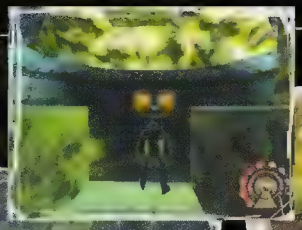
"...A mysterious figure known as Legion has travelled human history recruiting the souls of the worst purveyors of evil that have ever lived..."

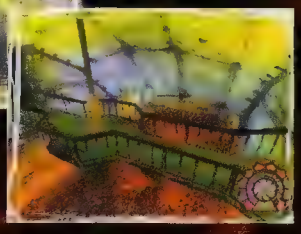


BEAR NECESSITY

To travel between the various worlds and time periods Shadow Man must employ the use of this teddy bear, which is an unusual feature for a stalker of the night, I'm sure you'll agree. However, the bear belonged to Mike Leroi's younger brother, Luke, who was killed along with his parents, a tragedy which the now-Shadow Man still feels responsible for. The bear acts as an emotional link with his little bro who he has heard calling plaintively to him in pain from the deadside, allowing him to travel between the planes. It's certainly no picnic.







"...THE CALLS FOR MATURE SUBJECTS IN COMPUTER GAMES WE'VE HEARD WERE BOUND TO CULMINATE IN A GAME LIKE THIS..."

The voodoo-tinged scenario behind the refreshingly Afro-American lead character goes beyond the plain stylistic trappings of Akuji and delves deeper into the quasi-religion's more unpleasant aspects, whilst adding an entire new layer of custom-conceived mythology sourced from the pages of the comic. Shadow Man himself is the arcane manifestation of Mike Leroi, a Leon-esque hitman for hire (and English Literature graduate) who goes by the underworld codename of Zero. This alter-ego was created by the sultry voodoo sorceress Nettie, who implanted the Shadow Mask in his chest: a powerful relic that grants him the ability to walk between the normal world and that of the deceased, along with other dark powers which are revealed as he goes deeper into the game. In a prophetic dream, Nettie foresees a hellish Armageddon spewing forth from Deadside, a Ragnorök of the walking dead defiling the land of the living forever, and so she sends Shadow Man (who is effectively enslaved to her will) to learn more before it's too late.

Lying behind this black plot is a mysterious figure known as Legion ('...because we are many!') who has travelled human history recruiting the souls of the worst purveyors of evil that have ever lived. First on his list is the murderer known as 'Springheel Jack' to his Victorian contemporaries, who will eventually become infamous as Jack the Ripper. As well as sexual dismemberment, one of Jack's skills was apparently architecture, and Legion requires both his homicidal talent and knowledge of buildings to help create his dread vision, a perverse factory for farming souls. The fact that to help the mysterious figure in his masterplan Jack has to be dead is virtually an afterthought, so he plunges a knife gladly into his own intestines (for a change). The factory Jack builds is, of course, the Asylum, which once completed will wring out the poor shades via the Dark Engine and open a system of portals so that the flood of murderous depravity will begin, with no hope of respite forever. The task of averting this disaster naturally falls to Shadow Man and his arsenal of weapons (both eldritch and high-calibre) which he wields to deadly effect.

Doom Raider

You'll probably glance at the screenshots and think 'Uh-huh. Gory Tomb Raider.' To an extent this is true, as Shadow Man follows the proven form of the classic 3D arcade adventure, with a practically placed camera that demonstrates great intelligence without any intrusive and tasteless swinging about in a behind-and-above third-person viewpoint which gives you the best angle to see the necrotic anti-hero in action. Shadow Man is also ambidextrous, so a weapon or tool can be assigned to each hand in [illegible] combination [illegible] any particular situation, while his agility lets him cling to ledges, [illegible] trooper and perform the [illegible] of manoeuvres required in [illegible] of game. His rangy form lo[illegible] great

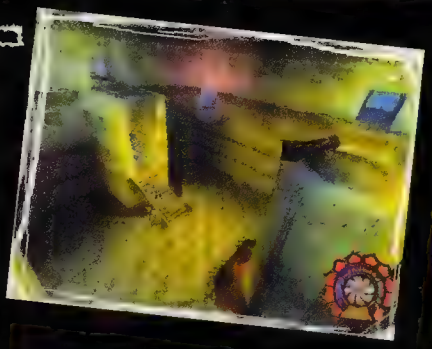
loping along in deeply unfashionable blue jeans, both in his mundane human form and as Shadow Man, especially as the game continues and the tattoos on his back begin to grow more prominent and angry-looking, while his eyes and mask glow menacingly in the dark (of which there is a great deal, let me tell you). Every so often he will spout a blackly humorous wisecrack, generally while wasting a horde of enemies. As you would expect the nasties Shadow Man encounters are a pretty gruesome bunch, spanning from deep-throated dobermans, that attack if you draw your guns, to albino sewer-dwelling versions of the same and electrically-charged fish that patrol the waters in Deadside. The humanoid enemies take the blood-soaked biscuit however, going beyond the already pretty sickening examples thrown up by previous games. The weird lanes of downtown Deadside are made hazardous by gangs of sobbing, orgasming corpse-women who want to suck Shad's soul dry in a particularly friendly manner, while the rancid cellars of the Asylum are guarded by pig butchers with gore-spattered aprons and gouging hooks for hands, who squeal nastily when they sight fresh meat. In underground caverns we encounter projectile-vomiting freaks that hawk spew with a truly disgusting sound, who will often abruptly ambush Shadow Man and then cruelly taunt him before dashing away again. They're a nasty-looking bunch (and I haven't even got particularly far into the game) →

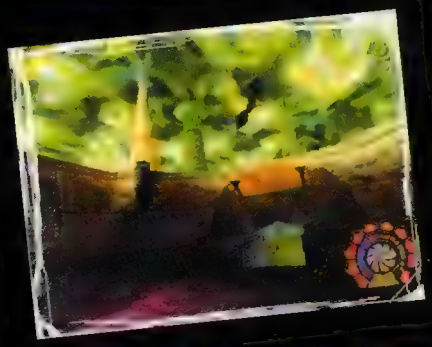
ABOVE: The strange and weirdly-hued skies above Deadside scud by constantly.

"...The aiming system is fluid and accurate without being over-formalised..."

Party of Pain

In keeping with the disconcerting nature of Shadow Man the press launch of the game was a strange and macabre affair. Journalists were made to don all-over paper forensic suits and board a brace of vintage buses before being driven to a secret location in the east end and assaulted by a genuinely scary show of pyrotechnics and dark imagery, replete with profanity and sexual scenes, all topped off with James Bond's stunt double. Reports back say that it was a trouser-filling experience, although let's face it, games hacks aren't noted for their steely resolve, are they?



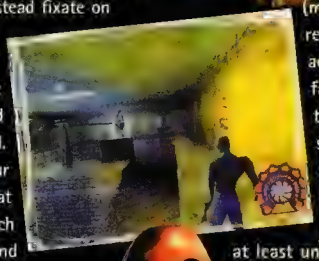


but even their vile appearance isn't the main source of unpleasantness, as plain Technicolor carnage can only go so far. What really sets Shadow Man apart is its attitude: twisted and sickening, and then twisted some more.

Play Nicely, Children

Perhaps the most obvious cultural reference point for the game is the film Seven. In it the perverse acts of the serial killer John Doe go beyond the mere sadistic impulse and instead fixate on making the pursuing detectives just as much victims as the people he tortures, amplified by his own gnarled vision of morality and artistic desires. Mere death is not enough, a profound defilement of mind as well as body is his goal. I'm sure the BBFC and other guardians of our spiritual well-being will be thrilled to learn that Shadow Man the game has assimilated such challenging themes unflinchingly and incorporated them into the previously innocent realm of the computer game. Everyone pays lip service to being scared by Resident Evil and Silent Hill but the terror in these is either that of anticipation or the boo! factor, momentary spikes of surprise and appal that are almost fun. The horror in this game, however, is the kind that slowly dawns on you with a wave of creeping revulsion and keeps crawling back and worrying way after you've stopped actually playing.

I'd love to describe one scene in particular which takes place in an abandoned New York tenement where you discover the fly-blown fruit of one demented murderer's efforts, but it would be unfair to dispel the power of the moment when it occurs during the game. Let's just say that it actually makes you want to find the killer and make him pay even more.



Look, But For God's Sake Don't Touch

As you would expect, the visuals follow similar lines of thought, although it's not all strewn body parts and so forth. After the salmon-pink sunsets of the easy-going first level (which looks almost like a sniggering parody of Oz) our mystic hero is forced to travel between the increasingly more bizarre parallel worlds, both by day (as Mike Leroi) and by night as Shadow Man. A disused Underground station (modelled on a real-life example) that's the reputed lair of Jack the Ripper is disturbingly accurate, but gradually becomes a lot less familiar the deeper inside he penetrates, while the above mentioned tenement building looks so lived in and stained that you can almost smell the damp mattresses. As night falls it becomes so dark inside that only sporadic gunfire can illuminate the impending gloom, at least until you liberate a torch from a useful corpse. Other locations seen so far include a grim-walled Texan prison during a riot (where the headless bodies of murdered guards tend to get up and start shooting) and the industrial morgue that is the Asylum, all massive Victorian mechanisms and cruel metal architecture. Whilst offering a wide range of visual moods the practical effect of this is that the gameplay from world to world is of a vastly different flavour. Some levels are Tomb Raider-esque exploration with careful discovery of precarious routes through a tricky landscape, while others have a more Mario 64 bent, with moving platforms and timed jumps aplenty to test co-ordination rather than logical skill. Gunfire fans needn't worry though, as some sections are more akin to Res Evil shotgun-fests, blasting through hordes of

ABOVE: These mysterious pseudo-Tarot cards are in Shadow Man's possession and could possibly provide cryptic clues that make more sense as he uncovers the plot.

Paper Shadows

Having a comic book based around you is stirling pedigree for any prospective computer game character and shadow man is no exception, particularly when you check out the uncompromising nature of the publication. Drawn in a modern delineated style, its subdued colours and fractious drawing style evoke the maddening world of mike/shadow man almost too vividly, and deal with strongly adult storylines and images that dispel any notions of cowled superheroism those wanting to see more should watch this space...

LEFT Here's our man trying to win his Duke of Edinburgh award badge.

ghastlies at a pace (a prime example is the prison level, which is reminiscent of the nasty-ass breakout scene in Natural Born Killers). Different tactical and strategic demands are thus placed on the player at every point, keeping him or her on their toes whilst not allowing the game to drop into an over-familiar rhythm.

Arcane Arsenal

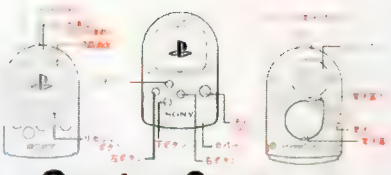
As far as weapons go, Shadow Man must be a paid-up member of the NRA and no mistake. His arsenal is a combination of commonplace munitions that an assassin-about-town would have at his disposal — such as barking sub machine guns, sawn-off shotguns and that gang-banger's favourite the Desert Eagle — plus some rather odd but devastating voodoo tools that use dark power to pyrotechnic effect. These include the Shadow Gun, that wails eerily when fired, the Flambeau, a kind of wand that projects pretty bursts of painful energy, and the Violator, a mean bio-mechanical gatling gun which whirrs constantly and roars into life with what is quite definitely the most terrifying and downright loud glass-shaking sound effect I've ever heard in a computer game.

This is complemented by the aiming system, which is fluid and accurate without being over-formalised, and the unashamed sprays of blood and meaty chunks the targets create upon impact will have abattoir workers feeling right at home. Balancing all this raucous sonic thunder is the excellent soundtrack that mimics the structure of the game as a whole, being in some places just indistinct and unsettling textures and in others grinding, pulsating non-music that almost sounds as if it's decaying. Metallic scrapes and groans fill the ears in the Asylum for example, whereas in Jack's subterranean lair a kind of crazed fairground organ undulates in the distance with malevolent glee. During more action-intensive sequences though, modern electronic beats suddenly flare up, echoing the brisk iciness of classic John Carpenter themes. It's unsettling in extremis, and works with the visuals like a cunning partner in crime to constantly unsettle the player .

Hardcore, You Know The Score

All the calls for mature subjects in computer games we've heard were bound to culminate in a game like this and almost by definition it will prove too much for the more weak-stomached members of the mainstream who would get freaked out by films like Jacob's Ladder or The Exorcist, say. It's admirable that Acclaim has designed a game that doesn't kowtow to bland commercial pressures which dictate that one should take as few real risks as possible and go for the biggest slice of the cash pie at all times. Let's hope that it makes it to the shelves as intact as possible without being diluted or made fluffy to avoid annoying sensitive-minded cultural critics that want to keep computer games as an idiot artform on a lower intellectual rung than books, movies and other socially approved media.

"...shadow man raises the psychological stakes to new confrontational levels..."



PocketStation™

PocketStation™

For Those About To Pock(et)...

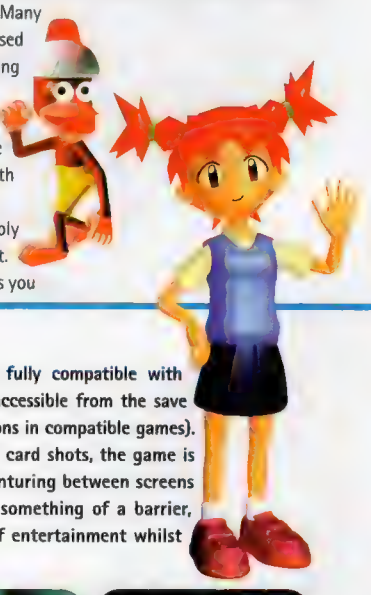
A memory card that lets you play monochrome games? What's the ruddy point? Such was the attitude to the PocketStation here at STATION mansions before we got our blagging, covetous mitts on one of these microcosmic marvels. Get a handle on the micro-hype for yourself...

The term PocketStation is somewhat misleading given what it connotes; namely a small PlayStation. The PocketStation is no accelerated powerhouse of polygon-manipulation. Compared to its sibling, the potent PlayStation, the PocketStation is something like a feeble fart amidst a tornado. Technical superiority is certainly not on the agenda for the PocketStation. Why, then, is this innovative and charming little gadget about to appear on our expecting shores? Will it enrich our lives beyond all expectation? Will it make tea and offer immediate, consequence-free, hangover cures?

Flip-Top Candy-Pop

Fitting snugly into a memory card port on the PlayStation, the PocketStation, to all extents and purposes, is a cosmetic memory card with a minute LCD screen you can play basic games on. Any old Game and Watch can do that; sufficiently better even. Many cynics (including the STATION boys) have in the past dismissed the PocketStation as pure propaganda, a novelty and a flailing swan song in the light of the impending Dreamcast. The truth is opposite: the PocketStation attests to the ingenuity of the PlayStation as a leading luminary in interactive entertainment – it's more fun than a vaseline pillow fight with Gail Porter. Well, almost.

PocketStation is not a 'rip off' of Tamagotchi, yet it is undeniably influenced by the simplistic appeal and aesthetic of the virtual pet. There is depth beneath the flip-top, midget screened PocketStation. it lets you



Hello Kitty White Present

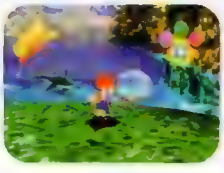
Personally, I abhor Hello Kitty and all her cutified kin. Just one minute with Hello Kitty in a sealed room with a blade, that's all I ask. The choice of this character for a PocketStation is a curious one, yet rational when one considers that Hello Kitty has a cult following in Japan.

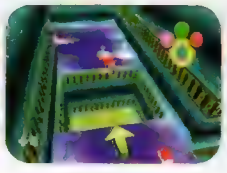
Downloading the sub-game to PocketStation initially gives you a picture of a grinning monkey before swamping you in Japanese text. Hello Kitty then appears on the PocketStation and proceeds to play some surreal and almost incomprehensible games. Not a wise choice on import.

Ape Escape

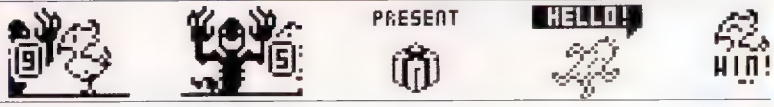
Sony's latest triple-A title promises to be fully compatible with PocketStation. The PocketStation option is accessible from the save game screen (as are most PocketStation options in compatible games).

Taking up twelve of the fifteen memory card shots, the game is fairly large. It takes the form of an RPG, venturing between screens and collecting items. The Japanese text is something of a barrier, but the UK version should provide plenty of entertainment whilst at Auntie Ada's for Sunday lunch.



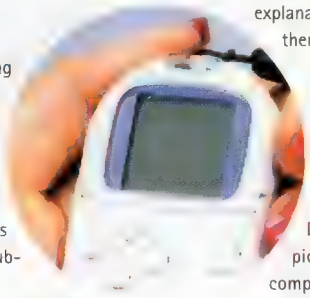


"...PocketStation is not a 'rip off' of Tamagotchi, yet it is undeniably influenced by the simplistic appeal and aesthetic of the virtual pet..."



take away with you versions of your favourite games to play as and when you want. Just not during that Gail Porter pillow fight, eh?

One Crash Bandicoot To Go, Please



The PocketStation is capable of accepting downloads from PlayStation games, giving you 'dumbed down' versions of the original game. These mini PocketStation games range far beyond the anticipated virtual pet phenomenon. *Street Fighter Zero 3*, for example, allows you to download various characters and, via simple-yet-amusing sub-games, build them up RPG style.

The potential for PocketStation is immense, limited only by the imaginations of developers. Imagine being able to strengthen your favourite fighter and then load them into a friend's PlayStation. It should allow games to become very personalised. Based around the technology of a 32bit RISC processor, the small frame of the PocketStation is actually more Geoff Capes than Norman Wisdom. Many future PlayStation games will be compatible with PocketStation, making it an essential purchase. Especially cool is the infa-red connection, allowing you to play 'linked' games with another PocketStation. It should make those tedious treks to work/school/university/brothel that little bit less tedious.

Some of you may already be aware of the PocketStation and its applications, so check out the boxouts for a detailed explanation of how the PocketStation works with them to get a fuller picture.

I Want One Now, Daddy

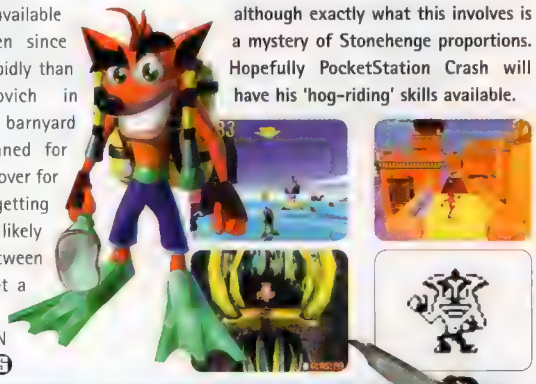
The inevitable question arises 'when is it getting a UK release?'. The PocketStation is already available in Japan, and has been since December, selling more rapidly than pictures of Mila Jovovich in compromising poses with barnyard animals. A UK release was planned for February this year, yet was procrastinated over for uncertain reasons; another case of the UK getting a raw deal in terms of releases. The most likely date is summer, with a projected price between £20-£30. PocketStation may not represent a technological leap, but it does show a great idea well realised. Stick with STATION for news as and when it breaks.

Street Fighter Zero 3

As the wheel of Street Fighter trundles inexorably toward exhaustion, Street Fighter Zero 3 shows a rare trait of innovation in being PocketStation compatible. Various characters can be downloaded to the PocketStation, including perennial favourites Ryu and Ken of the effeminate hair. Each character can be 'beefed up' by playing sub-games similar to the ones found in the game proper, such as block smashing and attacking targets.

Crash Bandicoot 3

Details of this are sketchy at STATION mansions, as our Japanese spy is recovering from a particularly gruesome encounter with the Triads while en route through Hong Kong. Doctors inform that his chances are favourable, as John Wayne Bobbit made a full recovery from the same affliction. Crash Bandicoot: Warped allows you to download a virtual Crash to your PocketStation, although exactly what this involves is a mystery of Stonehenge proportions. Hopefully PocketStation Crash will have his 'hog-riding' skills available.



Pocket Muu Muu

Pocket Muu Muu fits snugly into the 'mad Jap' genre of games. You play as a robotic rabbit lolloping around an aerial island, talking to the octopoid inhabitants whilst pondering the natural cause of events and exactly what colour the sky is in Japan. Pocket Muu Muu offers a choice of several games to download from in-game vendors, including a round of golf, a Spy Hunter-style vertically scrolling driving game and a shoot 'em-up. The games are highly playable in their own right, making this one of the finest PocketStation compatible titles. Any developers with future plans for the PocketStation should take note.

Final Fantasy VIII

It seems inevitable that possibly the most anticipated PlayStation title of 1999 will be PocketStation compatible. You can download characters from the game and nurture/strengthen them in a semi-Tamagotchi manner. Letting them die in a pile of their faeces is, sadly, not an available option, nor is giving them constant injections. Whether or not you can then upload the advanced characters back into the game remains to be seen, but it is a distinct possibility.

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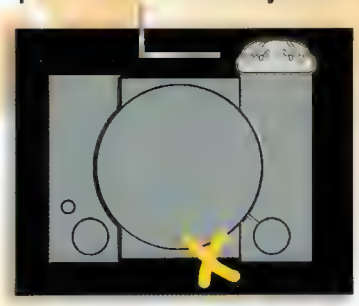

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JOYTECH EUROPE

Impressive Technology Prize Alert!

From now on, the best letter we print each month will receive a shiny new Pioneer DV-K101 DVD player courtesy of the fine guys and gals at Joytech, so get your brain cells working and scribble something that's interesting, dammit.

A Madman Writes...

Dear STATION,

I would like to see a game featuring the man who gives my life purpose, Captain Birdseye. You people at STATION seem reasonable enough to hear my ideas. When I say Captain Birdseye, I refer to the old-style Captain, the bearded and lecherous cackling one, with his snide remarks about fish fingers and golden fillets. My game would integrate all the elements of classic games, featuring sections with a *Doom* game engine, a driving section and some *Tomb Raider* high-jinx. Public awareness would be raised, bringing the old-skool Captain back to our screens. Sony would make a packet off this classy game.

David Leggey, Wilts

– Firstly, let's not beat around the bush, you are a very peculiar man indeed. Secondly, I think we have had enough product placement in games recently, thank you very much, and the thrill of a title based on frozen fish products will be limited to a small and sad audience. Besides if there was a game it would no doubt feature the new sexy captain and not the doddering old fool that you remember.

Who Are You Calling Stupid?

Dear STATION,

Are all PlayStation owners devoid of any intellectual capacity? Where are all the cerebral games that grace the PC? Decent adventure games are sorely lacking on the PlayStation. *Broken Sword 1* and *2* were superb, both visually and mentally proficient. The PC has some classics, such as *Sam and Max*, *The Dig*, *Darkseed* and *Toonstruck*. The PlayStation could easily cope with these games, so why not take a chance and release them?

Eliot Legrasse, Surrey

– Eliot, with your last sentence you have answered your own question. Companies have no desire to 'take a chance', they want guaranteed hits. Faced with an original, interesting adventure game and small hardcore audience, or a film tie-in beat 'em-up sequel, you know which way they're going to jump. Sad but true.

More Delays Than A Branson Train

Dear STATION,

Do games publishers take their customers for fools? I ask this question in a possibly naïve sense, because I really don't know the answer. I refer to the increasing predilection for 'unforeseen delays' in release dates for virtually all top games. Without even giving any serious thought to the matter, *Metal Gear*, *Quake II*, *Driver* and *Prince Naseem Boxing* spring immediately to mind.

Now, there are, of course, good reasons for doing this, which I understand and to a certain extent, agree with. If a game is not going to be of the very highest quality, then it is worth investing extra time. The problem is, that it seems to be happening all too often to be easily explained away – in any other industry such a repeated failure to meet deadlines would be cause for concern about the competence of the sector – it demonstrates a lack of self-awareness and over-estimation of internal talent at least. Look at the millennium dome or the channel tunnel for a comparison (of a larger scale, I grant you). Do we ever read of development teams reprimanded or even sacked as a result of consistent failure to produce games to schedule? Obviously not.

And the persistency of the problem raises some cynical doubts about the integrity of the field as a whole. Are games hyped early and then delayed deliberately in order to raise awareness of a product and build consumers' expectations? Or are deadlines deliberately set too short in order to impress onlookers? Is it in fact the fault of the press, reporting stories too early before release plans are finalised?

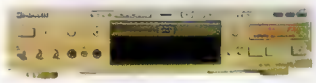
The point is, that while gaming is becoming an acceptable pastime for the more mature among us, the vast majority of players and readers of specialist magazines are young children, whose disappointment at delays in releases is profound and distressing. I don't subscribe to the infamous *Daily Mail* point of view, but I can't help feeling that we are being overly and unfairly manipulated.

Above all, do not let us go down the blighted road of the N64 and its persistent failure to deliver on time. See how alienated the consumer base has become in that respect.

Richard Stone, Strouden

– Richard, these are sagacious points indeed and worthy of reply. Delays are something of an ambivalent topic. Admittedly, the games industry is somewhat sensationalist and procrastination simply adds to the hype and mania of a game. The feeling of awed expectation that the new Star Wars film gives is certainly the same phenomenon. The longer the public wait, the better the chances of a definite purchase of a title. It may well be deliberate politic on the part of publishers to raise need and desire to fever-pitch, cunningly giving younger gamers time to save up for it, or hassle their parents. To say that these developers are manipulating the public is perhaps a little extreme, however. Many factors can delay games, from censorship issues to hardware problems. Quality is certainly worth waiting for, lest we be swamped in swathes of shoddy racing and fighting titles. You, as a consumer, are going to spend in the region of £40 for a title, so waiting for quality is the rational act. Unless you're one of the misguided who purchased Rugrats. The PlayStation has proven its worth many times with quality games, the time being well invested. For example, Metal Gear Solid and Final Fantasy VII would have been lesser games had they been rushed out onto the hungry market; cases of quality over quick profit. Games are like losing your virginity; the longer you wait, the better it generally is.

LETTER OF THE MONTH



Is There A Road Ahead?

Dear STATION,

I am concerned for the future of PlayStation. Many titles now are clearly 'third generation', pushing the grey box as far as it can go, and the reserve of untapped power left to continually astound seems to have run out. The N64 clearly has a year or two of development time before it peaks. What do Sony supporters have to look forward to until PlayStation 2?

Tony Fischer, Leeds

– Are you saying that developers should have held back in order to keep the 'untapped power' sacred? While people have imaginations, the world is in safe hands. Stop your bloody whinging.

Right up yer street!

PUMA STREET SOCCER GIVEAWAY! Win PUMA sportswear

As the summer months approach it's only natural that the call of the outside world may drag some of you away from the cathode ray nipple of TV and console and into the sunlight, ready for some character-building physical exercise. Others, though, may shun such healthiness and wish to stay glued to the hypnotic flickerings of the screen, their pallid skin approaching translucency and muscles wasting slowly away into mere strings of gristle. Now, thanks to the caring, sharing individuals at Infogrames you can take either option: don a full set of soccer garb and go forth to play in the street, jumpers for goalposts and all that, breathing the sweet air; or just install yourself on the sofa and play their far less strenuous urban footy game, *Puma Street Soccer*.

INFOGRAMES

WIN 5x:

- T-SHIRTS
- PUMA SPORTS BAGS
- BASEBALL CAPS
- SWEATSHIRTS
- REPLICA FOOTBALL STRIPS
- FOOTBALLS
- COPIES OF THE GAME

All of which will be distributed amongst five lucky winners. All you have to do is answer the following question:

QUESTION:

Which cat would win in a fight between a puma and a jaguar, and why?

Answers to:

WATCH THE FUR FLY COMP
STATION MAGAZINE
RAPIDE PUBLISHING
1 ROMAN COURT
48 NEW NORTH ROAD
EXETER
DEVON
EX4 4EP

All entries must reach us by 24th June 1999, and remember the Editor's decision wants to play with rush goalie.

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Next Month

EXCLUSIVE REVIEW & DEMO!

RC STUNT COPTER

After months of coquettish teasing the super-playable diddy chopper game is finally going to be here, and as is right STATION has dibs on the review. Has the epoch-rivalling delay paid off, or will the game do a convincing impression of Mike Smith taking the controls? We're betting on the former...

THAT'S NOT A MOON...

STAR WARS: EPISODE ONE

With what can only be described as a state of hysteria approaching, we at STATION are only too glad to jump on board the bandwagon and get all girly and excitable about Uncle George's blockbuster to end all blockbusters (oh yes and the tie-in game). Can it match up to the galaxy-spanning majesty of the movie? Probably not we'd have thought, but it'll be previewed anyway.

THREE E'S ARE GOOD!

EXCLUSIVE E3 REPORT

The Electronics Entertainment Expo is the largest annual gathering of everybody who is anybody in the videogames industry – and that includes STATION. Darren will be bringing back his exclusive report with hot news and gossip, developer interviews and of course... THE NEW LARA CROFT!

EXCLUSIVE FREE DEMO CD!

THE MOTHER OF ALL DEMOS

Chocka with proud playables and revealing rollers the others can only dream about getting, our next demo disc will be stuffed to the gills with defiantly top-notch and seriously cutting edge games.

PREVIEWS

Saboteur • V-Rally 2 • Rainbow Six
Pong • Rat Attack

ALSO:

360
Driver
Centipede
Aironauts
Ape Escape
Plane Crazy
Speed Freaks
Carmageddon
Kurushi: Final
Legacy Of Kain: Soul Reaver

ISSUE 10 ON SALE 24TH JUNE 1999

IF WE WERE TO SAY 'WHAT'S THE BIGGEST SELLING UNOFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MONTHLY IN THE UK?', THE ANSWER WOULD BE: 'STATION, MATE'

ソツオウオナウイカシオカクトテネウ!!?

BITE THE W

Nick 'Straitjacket' White peers into the Japanese psyche in search of both genius and dementia: why is their taste in games so wildly different to ours?

おめでと湯川専務!

Japan: a simple word, an innocuously small country that has made a vast impact on the mainstream of modern culture.

When the mind turns to Japan, myriad clichés and stereotypes present themselves: dapper businessmen singing karaoke; sycophantic people bowing without any provocation; weird gadgets to improve every aspect of accelerated life and the ability to purchase used schoolgirls' pants and sanitary products from a vending machine as easily as we would buy a Dr Pepper. It is a culture without taboo, a dichotomy living by the ethic of working hard and playing harder, without becoming as consumerist and material as America. And the games... Japan has given the world THE defining role models in the videogame world: *Mario*, *Sonic*, *Street Fighter* and *Final Fantasy*; all have been devised in this peculiar country the residents lovingly call Nippon. In our domestic game charts we still favour movie tie-ins and beat 'em-ups. The Japanese chart is dominated by titles such as dating simulations or Tamagotchi clones. The question is, why?

Eastern Promise

When one begins to deconstruct the Japanese culture, various traits become apparent that we can connect to their obscure and sometimes disturbing choice of games. The Japanese are ready to accept anything and will willingly take it to their hearts; as long as it gets merchandised to the hilt with toys, pencil sets and handheld variants of the game for the frenzy of commuting. Japan has embraced gaming culture at a fundamental level, devoid of the 'nerd' stigma that is inherent in the UK perception of games, a view that Sony have single-handedly managed to attenuate via their selective and post-modern advertising campaign. Hardcore Japanese gamers, on the other hand, can profit from their skills and be revered as celebrities.

Given that modern Japanese life is lived amongst a phalanx of thousands of others on a daily basis, both socially and commuting to work, the escapism games offer forms a relaxing alternative to the hectic turbulence of everyday life. Living amongst homogenised buildings gives the Japanese a lust for the surreal and fantastic. The next four pages should give you an idea about Japanese ideas and game culture, maybe even shedding some light on our own poe-faced attitude towards games. (Incidentally, 'bite the wax tadpole' is what Coca Cola literally means in Japan. The name was amended shortly after launch.)

Virtually Insane

The Japanese elicit great pleasure from the deity-type activity of controlling life and death in the form of cute and winsome handheld 'pets', Tamagotchi being the most renowned equivalent on these shores. The Japanese, characteristically, created the concept and have virtual characters of most cult phenomenon (rumours of Virtual Pant Sniffer are though, sadly, fallacy). This extends naturally to the field of games. In the UK the Tamagotchi PlayStation game sank like Dawn French in a swimming pool while it sold immensely in Japan. Games such as Monster Farmer and Pockemon Stadium dominate the charts there; being virtual pet simulations with the added bonus of improving your 'pet' by fighting other such monsters. Given that the majority of Japanese accommodation is within cramped and densely populated areas, pets are often banned to increase communal living standards. We in the UK have no need for Tamagotchi when we can easily possess our own living pet. Given that prohibition of domesticated animals, virtual pet games are the vicarious way they can enjoy the pleasure of a pet without mopping up crap and vomit.

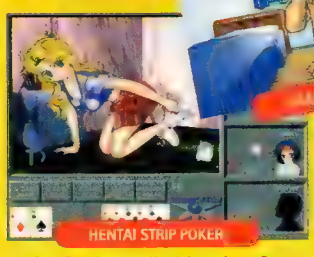
裸の日本

WAX TADPOLE

Balls To It

Japan has numerous high-tech, high-octane entertainments within its grasp, yet one of the most popular is pachinko, a traditional, simplistic game that unites all demographic aspects of the country. Pachinko has no technical splendour, no circuit boards or silicon components. Imagine the game as a form of archaic pinball, or the two pence 'shove' machines in most British seaside arcades, and you won't be too inaccurate. Ostensibly, it is a vertical cabinet littered with small nails and wheels forming a random 'run', into which ball bearings are inserted. The aim is to get the bearings into a scoring zone, thus winning more balls. With so many Japanese games reliant on skill and tenacity for mastery, the fact that pachinko is solely a game of luck is something of a baffling contradiction to the cultural norm. Pachinko reinforces the traditional element of Japanese culture, it is a manifestation of their adherence to, and innate love of, traditional ways in the face of rapidly advancing technology, rather akin to the way UK gamers still enjoy retro games. At least British fruit machines pay out cold hard cash. Sometimes.

Wanky Manga



Inevitably we arrive at the chucklesome and characteristically Japanese subject of hentai (pronounced Hen-Tie), essentially manga animation-style girls in states of undress and compromise. Where else but Japan could you saunter into a games retailer and purchase games such as Time Stripper, Hentai Strip Poker and Transfer Student; all titles that feature copious nudity under the tenuous premise of a game. Whilst we in Britain still drool at the distended assets of Ms Croft, the Japanese are way ahead of us in conquering their taboos by devoting entire games to the subject of virtual nudity, proving their sense of fantasy and escapism is considerably more advanced than the furtiveness and shame of British attitudes.

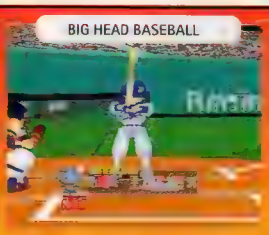
おめでと
湯川専務

Genius Or Dementia?

Take a peek at some of the lacklustre UK PlayStation releases of late: racing titles, fighting games and mundane platformers, a scene moribund via the lack of fresh, creative blood. Japan is being rocked by *Final Fantasy VIII*, not to mention a wealth of diverse and engaging titles, making the English game development scene seem depressingly like Thora Hird: tepid and lifeless. The production of games in Japan is a task of Hollywood proportions, employing vast teams of specialist experts, each dedicated to a specific aspect of the game development. It forms a colossal pool of ideas to eventually make for an entertaining and innovative product, lovingly created and tweaked to perfection. UK teams tend to be tighter and more organised. Impressive enough, but what really matters is a that game takes the player to a new vista of experience, an aspect only the Japanese developers seem to have realised.

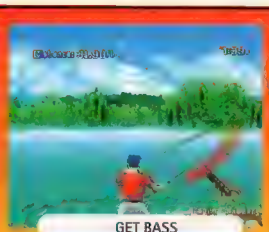
おめでと
湯川専務

BIG HEAD BASEBALL


BIG HEAD BASEBALL

EXCITING BASS

EXCITING BASS


GET BASS

Wot, No Footah?

The Japanese are an active people, despite the many labour-saving devices they perceive as mandatory to their lives. As is the case in all civilised nations, sports, and the spectating of, are enjoyed on a wide-scale in Japan. The stadia are family oriented and notably absent of any of the violence that British football matches can spontaneously erupt into. However, the sports games the Japanese choose to grace their PlayStation with are something of a curiosity: horse racing and fishing, for example. Gallop Racer and Exciting Bass are immensely popular games in Japan, dealing with all aspects of the sport in question, from racing to breeding, casting to catching. It is, arguably, the Japanese love of detail that makes these games so popular in Nippon, as well as that fact that horse racing and fishing are not easy sports to participate in. So they create an interactive version rather than view the sport on television as is the UK custom. Other sports titles in Japan end up being 'twisted' to meet their psyche, such as Big Head Baseball.

GALLOP RACER

GALLOP RACER

裸の日本

Mondo Bizarro

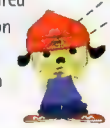
DANCE! DANCE! REVOLUTION

HELLO CHARLIE!

KITTY CUBE DE CUTE

The Japanese are seldom stagnant in their ideas, as proven in their gaming creativity. Whereas UK gamers are subjected to an indomitable stream of clones of a popular game, the Japanese strive to invent something new. They enjoy games such as *Notam Of Wind* (hot air balloon simulator), *Hello Charlie!* and *Kitchen Panic* (egg-based platform game), *Kitty Cube de Cute* (nausea-cute puzzle game), *Irritating Stick* (dexterity-test game) and *Tail Concerto* (dog-in-robot-suit game). We in the UK can avidly anticipate such groundbreaking titles as *Tekken 4*, *Ridge Racer 5* and *Need For Speed 26*: safe, derivative and banal. The Japanese are not afraid of their creative impulses, positively encouraging innovative concepts and not expediently abandoning them for another prosaic racing title. Their culture is geared toward progression and evolution, an ethos that partly explains their love of outré games. Britain has always feared change, our reluctance to embrace European Union is a prime example, this factor perhaps being the ostensible reason for the vast difference between our two cultures.

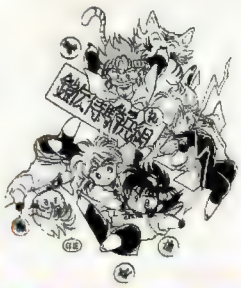
▲ One hardly needs the screenshots, a glossary of name games alone could provide hours of lexical distraction.



KITTY CUBE DE CUTE

オカクトテネウ!!

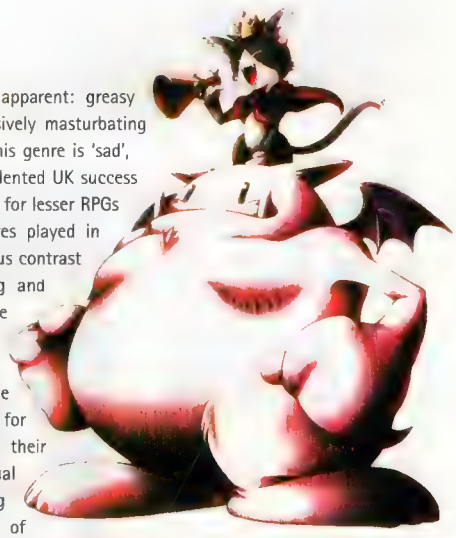
キツネネタ
ケテチハオカツハキ
ウカキツネタ
カチスオツテハウク
テケケ　ケツセウ
アチツシテオツス
キナウウトへ
カソチキウク　オナウ
トテツキテハフ　カネオナテチコナ
ウネウトナカハオキ　クエチハヌウハネタ
エチキウク　ケツセウ　オカツハキフ　ハ
ウキテオカ　ケツコナオキ　テハウ
テソウキウ　オエカツネウエフ
ソウスカチキウ　ケツセウ　カスツ
ハオテキナウキ　スネウセウエネタ　オウク
テハウ　イカエオ　へ　ヨナウ
リカソソウエイテスヌタ



BITE THE WAX TADP

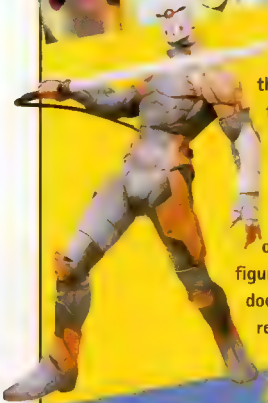
Not Just For Nerds

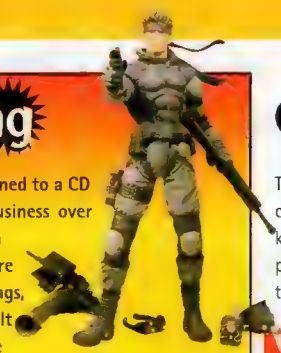
When the innocuous letters RPG are mentioned, various stereotypes become apparent: greasy adolescents, riddled with acne, leering over tabletop wargames when not excessively masturbating themselves into a stupor. Perhaps the word most associated with this genre is 'sad', something of a contradiction given the unprecedented UK success of *Final Fantasy VII*, and even acceptance for lesser RPGs such as *Wild Arms*. Of all gaming genres played in Japan, RPGs are the most popular, a curious contrast to the comparative popularity of driving and combat games in the UK. As I have mentioned before, the Japanese have a love of detail in their games, a fact that becomes prevalent in the design stage as well as the actual playing. RPGs are the dedicated relief for this statistical anal-retention, allowing gamers to build up their characters from inexperience (mirroring the obsession with virtual pets) whilst immersing themselves in reams of figures and tables. Tellingly, it was the plot that received much praise and panegyric in Japan whilst the UK adulated the game for its sumptuous graphics, a microcosm of the cultural divide.



▲ **You'll see characters like this spring up in our imports section. They may seem odd, but the style is as pan-cultural as EastEnders.**

From PlayStation To Keyring





Gaming is not a pastime that remains confined to a CD in Japan. Merchandising is a lucrative business over there. A popular game character can rapidly become the victim of exposure overkill, becoming embossed upon bags, figures, clothing, novelty items and videos. It certainly highlights the profound love the Japanese harbour for the noble pursuit of games, where the characters become celebrities in their own right. A poll, taken several years ago in America, showed that Mario was more recognised a figure then Mickey Mouse. The Japanese respect their gaming culture and are not ashamed to show it via the medium of merchandise. The UK, by contrast, fails to cash in on this trend, with only the most popular of titles meriting a few meagre figurines, and only then via an importer. Then again, this does mean that the UK will never encounter the repugnance and disgust of Hello Kitty.

Charting The Trends

This entire feature could be little more than random conjecture, unsubstantiated by proof or certitude of any kind. As is sacrosanct to all good journalism, proof is provided. Study these comparative top 5 charts, from April this year. Questions will be asked...

UK	JAPAN
1. Metal Gear Solid	1. Monster Farm 2
2. Rugrats	2. Final Fantasy VIII
3. A Bug's Life	3. Pop Music
4. FIFA '98	4. World Neverland 2
5. Bellhop	5. Tomorrow Data

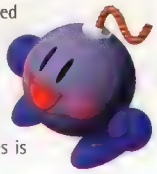
Summarising the UK charts, the picture that forms is one of tenuous movie tie-ins, triple-A titles and the customary racing/football games. As one would expect. The Japanese chart shows diversity and eclecticism, with virtual pet games, rhythm-action and particularly surreal RPGs riding high. The Japanese favour variety and ingenuity over tepid variants of established concepts, unlike UK gamers who rush out in a paroxysm for the latest weak film conversion or *FIFA* title. That being said, Japan is as much of a faddish culture as the UK, the difference being that Japanese fads tend to be the ones that instigate the fads in other cultures, Tamagotchi being a prime example. Perhaps it is not the Japanese games that are eccentric and screwed up. Perhaps it is the UK games scene that is sterile and lacking innovation, staggering towards a creative death.

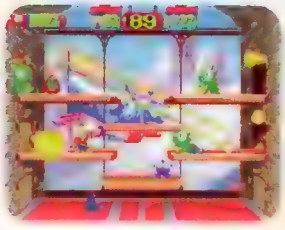
WIN!

Everything must Yo!

Yo Yo's PUZZLE PARK

To celebrate the arrival of their disturbingly cute platformer *Yo Yo's Puzzle Park*, the generous staff at JVC have donated their personal stash of extremely expensive and stylish yo-yos to you, the STATION massive. We've got ten professional-quality string-travellers to give away to the most worthy readers who are desperate to Split the Atom in true style. All you have to do to win one of these playground-wowing lovelies is answer the below question in as pleasing a manner as possible:





QUESTION:

What would you like to have on the end of a string, and why?

Answers to:

'YO!' IS NO LONGER A COOL GREETING COMP
STATION MAGAZINE
RAPIDE PUBLISHING
1 ROMAN COURT
48 NEW NORTH ROAD
EXETER
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All entries must reach us by 24th June 1999, and remember the Editor's decision still can't Rock the Baby.

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THEY SAY THE DEAD
KNOW NO PAIN...
PC CD
PlayStation
LEGACY of KAIN
SOUL REAVER
CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
EIDOS
INTERACTIVE

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BACK ISSUES

ISSUE ONE
ON THE DEMO DISC:
ISS Pro '98 • Ninja
Tomb Raider III (rolling)
Tomb Raider I & II

ISSUE TWO
ON THE DEMO DISC:
Abe's Exoddus • Abe's Oddysee
B-Movie • Dead Ball Zone

ISSUE THREE
ON THE DEMO DISC:
Metal Gear Solid (rolling)
Tomb Raider III • Actua Soccer 3
Actua Golf 3 • Actua Tennis
Virtual Lara

ISSUE FOUR
ON THE DEMO DISC:
Akuji the Heartless
Formula 1 '98 • TOCA 2
Music • The Unholy War
Brian Lara Cricket (rolling)

ISSUE FIVE
ON THE DEMO DISC:
Gex: Deep Cover Gecko (rolling)
Max Power Racing
Player Manager Season 98-99
Michael Owen's WLS '99
S.C.A.R.S • Shadow Gunner

ISSUE SIX
ON THE DEMO DISC:
Premier Manager '99
Viva Football • Warzone 2100
Rival Schools • Motorhead
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver (rolling)

ISSUE SEVEN
ON THE DEMO DISC:
Rugrats • Metal Gear Solid
Silent Hill (rolling) • Apocalypse
Shao Lin (rolling) • G-Darius
Trap Runner (rolling) • Kensei (rolling)
Vigilante 8 • Diver's Dream (rolling)

ISSUE EIGHT
ON THE DEMO DISC:
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BARNEY GOES CARNIVORE

They have evolved to stalk their prey with cunning and stealth. We have huge guns. Let the crisis begin...

DINO CRISIS

PUBLISHER: Virgin

DEVELOPER: Capcom

RELEASE DATE: Winter

GAME TYPE: Survival/Reptilian Hi–Jinx

PAL Percentage Complete: 50%

EARLY VERDICT

DINO CRISIS: For

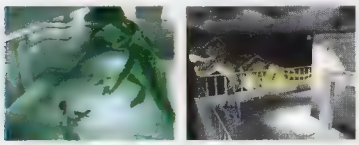
Tense and captivating, a cold shower for your gaming needs. With experienced minds toiling on this title, brilliance is assured.

DINO CRISIS: Against

Essentially the *Resident Evil* game engine with a few dinosaurs lobbed into the pot to entice gamers to purchase in a paroxysm of desire.

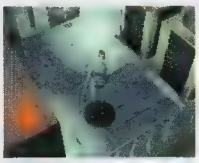
Anticipation Rating 90%

Resident Evil with dinosaurs. Could a better fusion of elements ever be found on this green earth? Apart from *Billie Strip Poker*, that is.



LEFT: Ruth's new perfume attracted attention from some unwanted admirers.

"When you least expect anything dramatic to occur is when Dino Crisis will startle..."

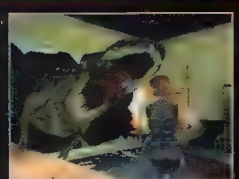


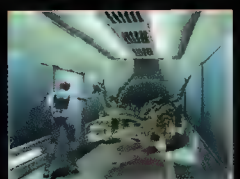
When the creative genius behind the *Resident Evil* games announces a new project, those in the know have the sense to pay attention. Dino Crisis, phantom like, has suddenly appeared from obscurity and is flaunting a depth and involvement that few will be able to resist, except perhaps the hardcore following of Noel Edmonds. The protagonist is a female Special Force agent called Regina, summoned to investigate a Jurassic mêlée on Ibis Island, a place where certain nefarious experiments are occurring; namely the creation of dinosaurs from crude genetic matter. Didactically, the genetic experiments of the mandatory 'mad' professor have become insurgent, choosing to feast on human flesh by way of non-peaceful protest against their creation. Ghandi would never approve. The Island of Dr Moreau is about to appear like *Playbus* by comparison...

En-raptored

Dino Crisis is a captivating game in all aspects, opting for a fully 3D environment instead of the pre-rendered 'stills' of *Resident Evil*. The atmosphere will generate a constant sense of unease during play, similar to a Carpenter or Romero film. The milieu is kept purposefully dark, not as a sign of graphical apathy, but as a device of suspense. Colours are grim and gritty and each location is heightened by trivial effects such as flickering lights. Imagine the scene: low on health and with only three bullets in your pistol, you approach a corner in a location you have never visited before. You hear a scrabbling sound drawing closer and a cast shadow playing portentiously ahead of you. Something is out there, hidden in the shroud of darkness, seeking your flesh. This terror is the crux of the Dino Crisis experience.

ROUGH WEE BEASTIES

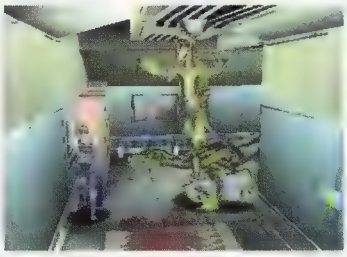
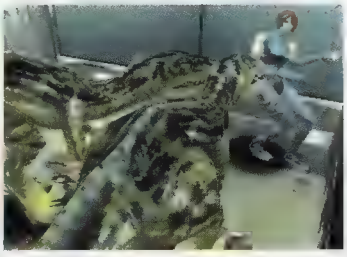




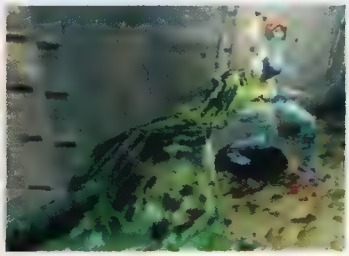
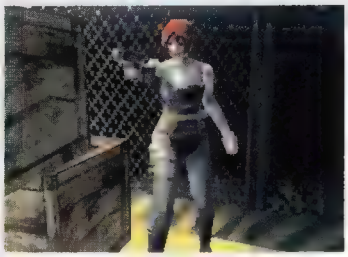
Dinosaurs may have become extinct several million years ago, yet they are given a renaissance in Dino Crisis. When you see them move, pivot and lurch to attack, you will believe; and simultaneously eject most of your bowel contents.

THE STORY UNFOLDS...

Here you are, a female investigator, finding yourself in a military complex on an isolated island. You are grouped with a team of espionage agents, searching for a scientific

genius who has been presumed dead, but word has it that he lives and it is up to you to find him. The professor has spent his life working on trying to end pollution all over

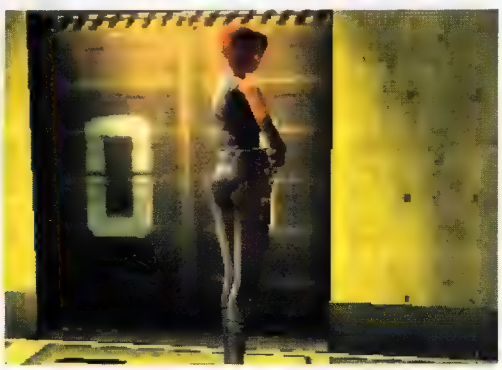
the world, but you soon find that something has gone seriously wrong and now you must contend with roaming dinosaurs out for blood. It's survival or pure bloody carnage.

Cutscenes occur in realtime, similarly to *Resident Evil*, maintaining the atmosphere, as do the shocks. The moment you least expect anything dramatic to occur is the moment that Dino Crisis will startle with a sudden 'jump'. Beware the silence is the only advice we'll offer you. Then again, Dino Crisis is full of agonisingly tense silence.

Tooth And Gore

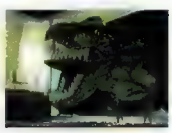
Gore is naturally high on the agenda, with blood spurting like a thousand severed jugulars, necessitating at least a 15 certificate upon UK release. The dinosaurs themselves will undoubtedly steal the show; the raptors looking especially sinister with their malign rictus. Remember the shock and awe you felt when you encountered the T-Rex in *Tomb Raider*? Dino Crisis amplifies that considerably. One section of the game sees Regina engaged in a frantic rooftop battle with a gigantic T-Rex, several stories high, that stalks her and can dismember her with consummate ease.

A strong element of puzzle solving is also going to be added into the fray, hopefully a little more in-depth than the somewhat elementary 'find key for door' enigmas in the *Resident Evil* games. Dino Crisis will inevitably be huge, positively dwarfing Vanessa Feltz' knickers. The plot is being kept close to Capcom's chest, sagely enough, but it will involve numerous unexpected kinks and several secretive characters with dubious motives. Quite why Regina wears a leather basque *over* a lycra bodysuit is beyond us here at STATION, but we can live with such disregard for female couture. Prepare to immerse yourself in fear and panic once again and stick with STATION for exclusive news as it erupts like a prolapsing internal organ.

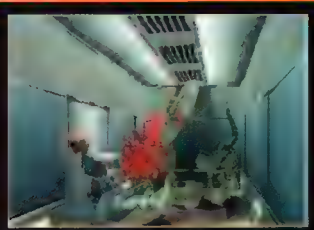


LEFT TO RIGHT: Samba classes were cancelled as one of the dancers was brutally consumed by a passing 'saurus; a combination of state-of-the-art light sourcing and smooth textures make Dino Crisis look sumptuous.

"Gore is naturally high on the agenda, with blood spurting like a thousand severed jugulars..."



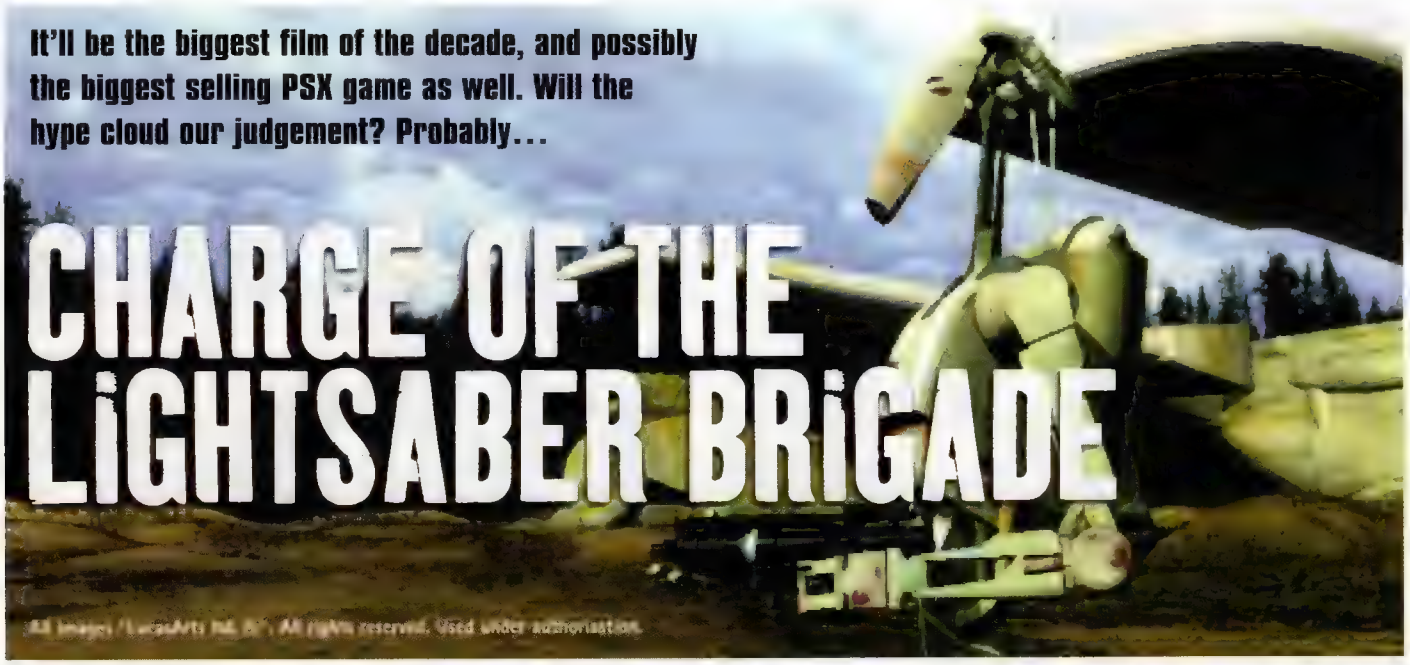
SPLATTERHOUSE



Dino Crisis is, quite literally, bloody fantastic. Imagine all the gore of Braindead and Bad Taste, multiply it, and you have the gore quota for Dino Crisis. It should be an intense experience.

It'll be the biggest film of the decade, and possibly the biggest selling PSX game as well. Will the hype cloud our judgement? Probably...

CHARGE OF THE LIGHTSABER BRIGADE



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STAR WARS: EPISODE ONE

PUBLISHER: Activision

DEVELOPER: LucasArts/Big Ape

RELEASE DATE: June

GAME TYPE: 3D Arcade Adventure

PAL Percentage Complete: 85%

EARLY VERDICT

STAR WARS: EPISODE ONE: For

With such prime visual and mythical fuel it's bound to look the part, and LucasArts won't want to cock up such a licence to print money.

STAR WARS: EPISODE ONE: Against

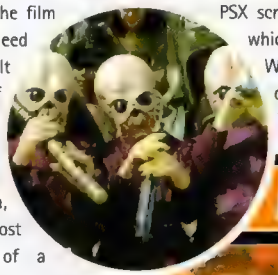
Star Wars games don't exactly have a shining pedigree on any format, let's face it.

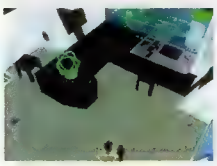
Anticipation Rating 85%

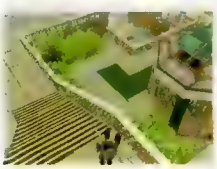
As a theme its unbeatable, but the gameplay has to match up, of course, or it'll be a cruelly hollow experience.

LEFT TO RIGHT: The leafy lanes of Naboo are made hazardous by those sentry droids, prime candidates for some impromptu lightsaber adjustments; surrounded by war droids all this Jedi can do is stretch out with his feelings and hope for the best.

By the time you reach this there'll probably be a mood in the country approaching hysteria surrounding the imminent arrival of *Star Wars: Episode One*, with the publicity achieving a kind of critical mass where the film and all its myriad merchandising no longer need advertising, but create a form of hype gestalt entity that pervades every conceivable form of media. In the US some lunatics have just started camping out in front of cinemas, six blinking weeks before the movie is shown, while you can almost hear the hum of a thousand tie-ins being prepared, from cornflakes to duvet covers to Happy Meals.



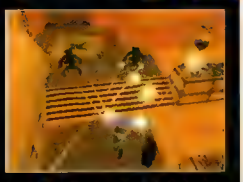




As arguably the single most lucrative mass cultural opportunity in history, it's inevitable videogames will be in on the act, especially with such striking basic material to work with. It'll come as no surprise then that there will be two tie-in games to reap as much moolah as possible, one a three-dee arcade adventure type thing and a second game based around a speeder bike racing sequence on the surface of Tattoine. At the moment, the only solid information and PSX screenshots available are from the former game, which is based around controlling a fresh-faced Obi-Wan as he takes on hordes of those spindly war droids with his lightsaber and Force-based skills. These abilities include the Force Push, which can

> "...abilities include the Force Push, which can clear a path through a thicket of enemies, and the Force Jump..."

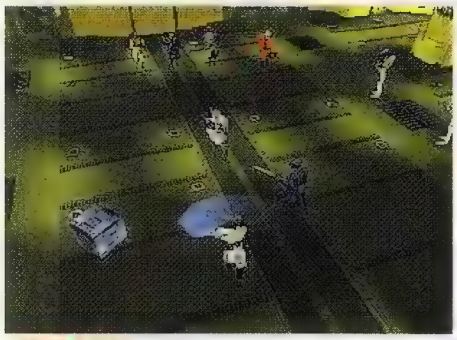
A GRACEFUL WEAPON

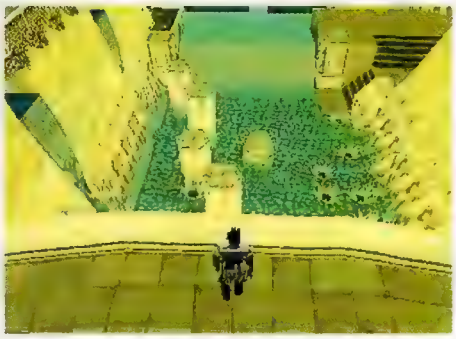


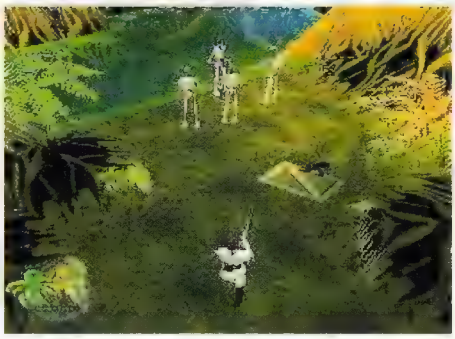
The weapon of the choice is, of course, the lightsaber, although as in Jedi Knight on the PC it won't be your only one. Let's hope that its use is fairly intuitive...

DUN-DUN-DUN DUN-DA-DUM, DUN-DA-DUN...

As you would expect, advance shots of the film are rarer than rocking horse poo and kept under the iron control of LucasArts' fleet of high-priced lawyers. However, we're sure you're hungry for taster images from the Phantom Menace, so here's a few choice pics that are currently in the public domain



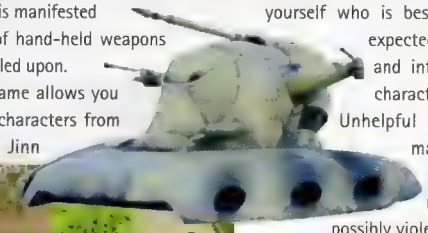




LEFT TO RIGHT While Syphon Filter and Metal Gear Solid have recently taken the 3D Adventure to new levels, they could pale at the size of this one's licence; it's not just about swinging a luminescent stick, however. There's a certain amount of cerebral involvement too; Force Throw your 'saber at the grouping to take them all out in one go.

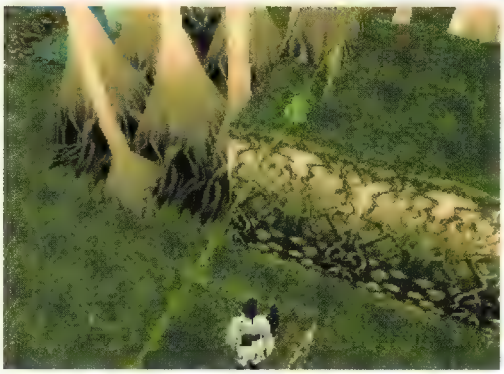
clear a path through a thicket of enemies, and the Force Jump that propels a Jedi skywards as if his feet were spring loaded. Of course, it's possible to deflect blaster bolts with his lightsaber (although it will be interesting to see how this is manifested in the gameplay), while a range of hand-held weapons and heavier artillery can also be called upon.

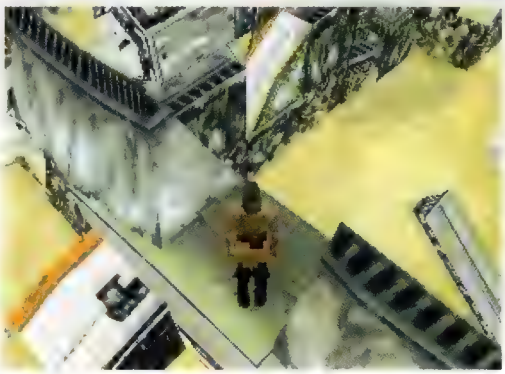
Progression further into the game allows you to take on the persona of other characters from the film, including Qui-Gon Jinn (another resourceful Jedi), the twin-faced Queen Amilada and her bodyguard, Captain Panakabut. Each individual is slaved to a particular environment, so unfortunately you can't select for yourself who is best for certain situations. As well as the expected action sequences, there will be puzzles and interaction aplenty, with dialogue between characters required to discover clues and so forth. Unhelpful individuals you encounter can be manipulated using the Jedi Mind Trick, although some species are immune to your mental probings and become annoyed and possibly violent. At later stages you will have to take on the dastardly Darth Maul in personal combat and travel to locations such as Coruscant, the galactic capital, and the verdant planet of Naboo.

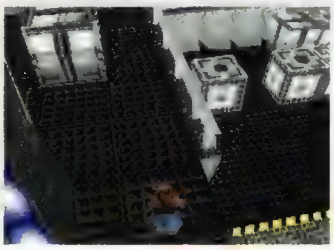


> "Unhelpful individuals you encounter can be manipulated using the Jedi Mind Trick, although some species are immune to your mental probings and become annoyed and possibly violent..."

At the moment there are no shots of the racing game but it should be a *WipEout*-esque effort with simulated speeds of up to 600mph, with you taking the role of the diminutive Anakin Skywalker or a whole range of other wacky racers. More info is being leaked slowly and deliberately from LucasArts day by day, so by next issue we should have a decent amount of stuff for you all to get excited about. And remember, the Force will be with you, always.







REACH FOR THE SKY

Turn on your televisions, turn off your brains and watch the most bizarre gameshow in history. Get ready to fly...

AIRONAUTS

PUBLISHER: Red Storm

DEVELOPER: Red Lemon

RELEASE DATE: July

GAME TYPE: Flight Sim

PAL Percentage Complete: 80%

EARLY VERDICT

AIRONAUTS: For

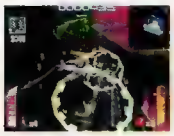
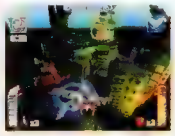
A welcome title trying to create its own genre, and the graphics seems of a very high quality.

AIRONAUTS: Against

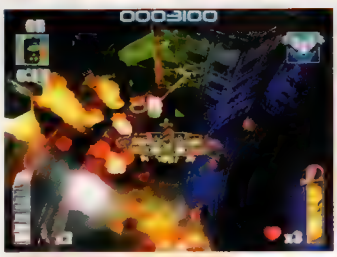
Well, it is still a flying game, however they try and dress it up. Can it really show us anything new?

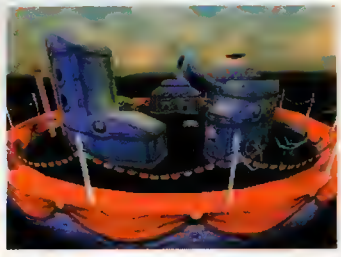
Anticipation Rating: 60%

Hard to imagine anyone holding their breath for this one, but as word spreads, it could capture some imaginations.

"...a gladiatorial in which a number of tasks must be completed. Should you be victorious you will receive a complete pardon..."





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Oh we love to see things blown up. Yes, we do. Fortunately there are plenty of indulgences here; choose your prisoner/competitor from this shady bunch; here's your arena, take careful note. Now get flying, boy!

The future is upon us, a time when the entertainment world and the penal system have been brought together to produce a show which keeps everyone glued to their goggle boxes. That show is Aironauts and you are the next star. It is a gladiatorial competition in which you will find yourself taking the challenge of flying through the skies on a specially designed glider, and a number of different tasks must be undertaken in order to succeed. Should you be victorious you will be given a complete pardon and let back out into the real world. Has Jack Straw never considered this?

The game features two separate modes, including a very useful training option so that you can perfect your style before taking the real challenge. Take the option of heading straight into the main game, though, and you will have to work your way through 10 different levels, all of which feature four distinct challenges and a guardian, who must be defeated to progress. Once you begin to rack up victories, visit the shop and purchase power-ups to make your glider as effective as possible. Various quests await you, including not only blasting action, such as detonating barrels, but also more complicated skill based missions such as navigating your glider through checkpoints, or having to land in a designated spot. At other times it is merely speed which is the order of the day, as one of the guardians challenges you to a head-to-head race. Aironauts promises original gameplay as well as incorporating ideas from classic titles such as *Pilotwings*. Strap on your pack and get flying, soon.

ABOVE: Bright, repetitive patterns suggest set design by Mandelbrot.

ABOVE: Aironauts is very much a visual feast, and the screen is constantly alive with activity.

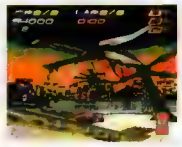
Gentlemen, start your engines and prepare for some humorous and gory action. *Zombie Turismo*, anyone?

BLOOD ON THE TRACKS

When you first start investigating the weirder side of cinema, you may come across a '70s oddity called *Death Race 2000*, all moody camera angles and brainless action. Well, now the PlayStation will have the gaming equivalent of this modern classic with the release of Carmageddon, a racing game which is cut from a different cloth to the rest on the market. Sure, you can simply speed about and beat your opponents, but if this doesn't float your boat then why not play demolition derby style or forget the opponents all together and just run down some pedestrians to watch the plasma fly – all these options will lead you to victory.

The game will feature 30 different cars, all of which possess state of the art handling physics and show real-time collision damage. Eighty per cent of the tracks are brand new whilst the other fifth are taken from the PC version of *Carmageddon 2*: they include an F1 circuit, a ski resort and the jungle, and there are a number of secret areas on each to be discovered. Multiplayer action involves straight racing, crashing the other player off the road or murdering the most pedestrians. Pick ups are strewn around the battlefield and range from the very useful, such as turning your car into solid granite, to the ridiculous: eg. peoples' heads growing to outrageous sizes.

With such a good variety of tracks, cars and add-ons as well as the bloodthirsty elements, there should be much here to catch the imagination. Just remember, they are not people you are killing, they are zombies. Then again controversy never hurt anyone.



LEFT: So I take a single wrong turn and end up face to face with a blooming huge dragon. What sort of city is this, exactly?

> "...forget the opponents all together and just run down some pedestrians to watch the plasma fly..."

CARMAGEDDON

PUBLISHER: SCi

DEVELOPER: In-House

RELEASE DATE: June

GAME TYPE: Kill Driving

PAL Percentage Complete: 80%

EARLY VERDICT

CARMAGEDDON: For

Nice *Mad Max* scenario with ample opportunity for gratuitous violence and blood splattered pedal to the metal action.

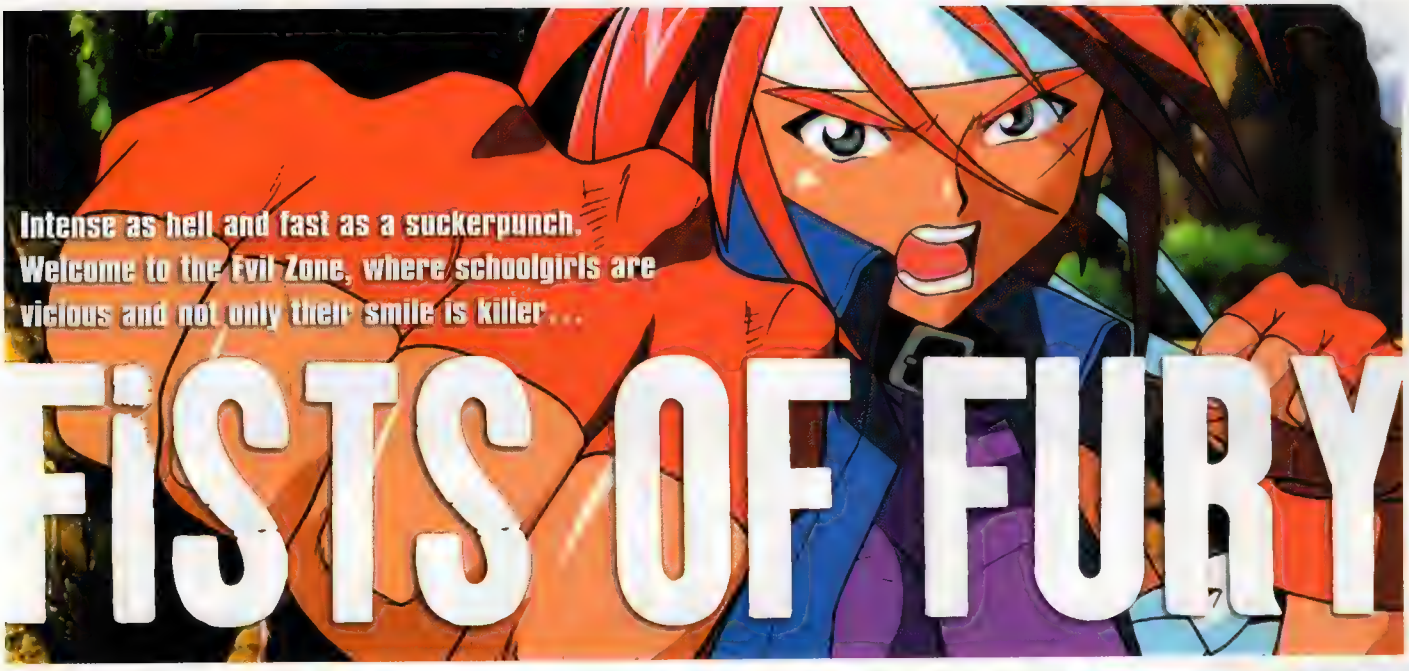
CARMAGEDDON: Against

The racing aspects will need to retain your interest after the thrill of random murder has faded.

Anticipation Rating: 80%

Fans of the PC version will be waiting to see if the console incarnation lives up to the original.

LEFT TO RIGHT: That's going to come out of your insurance young man; who needs a horn when you can just push roadhogs off the track?; there's no business like snow business.



Intense as hell and fast as a suckerpunch. Welcome to the Evil Zone, where schoolgirls are vicious and not only their smile is killer...

FISTS OF FURY

EVIL ZONE

PUBLISHER: Titus

DEVELOPER: Yokeo

RELEASE DATE: June

GAME TYPE: Beat 'em-up

PAL Percentage Complete: 85%

EARLY VERDICT

EVIL ZONE: For

This is entertainment without compromise. Thrive on split-second decision and revel in the spectacular cinematic qualities.

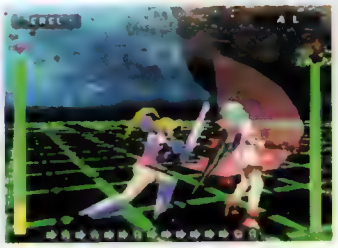
EVIL ZONE: Against

Not a 'combat simulation' but a coin-op style title. Those looking to master intricate combos would do better with the *Tekken* range.

Anticipation Rating 85%

Us cynical journalist types are rarely enticed into a paroxysm by a game; yet Evil Zone drew Wembley stadium crowds in the office. We demand this game now. Yesterday, even.

"Moves explode into action like a human lightshow, flooding the screen with pyrotechnic splendour."



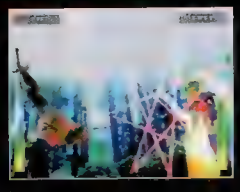
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Doppelgänger day was a huge success...; the camera sways unsteadily during moves, making for dramatic viewing; practice mode allows you to improve your destructive capabilities.

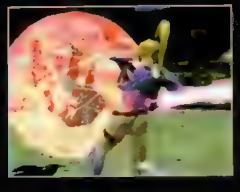
The humble fighting game has, of late, become a passion of almost trainspotter potential. The sheer thrill of inflicting harm on another individual has become a rescinded priority. Fighting games have lost the sadistic ethos that gave them their appeal. The modern focus has shifted to precision counter-attacks and fastidiously particular combos that only a multi-armed Hindu deity can truly master. True to our generation of convenience and sloth, we demand a fighting game that boasts instant results with minimum effort. Some would claim that this is a futile dream. These people have obviously never partaken of Evil Zone.

Jackie Chan On Acid

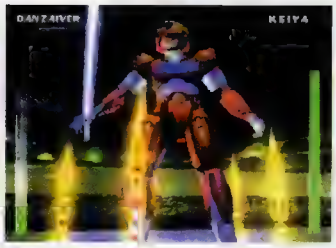
Evil Zone is an atavistic fighting game, taking us back to the hazy times when fighting games were about honest, clean fun – if you consider disembowelling a stunned opponent an honest, clean pursuit, as Ghengis Khan did. The plot is expendable, focused around an evil, omnipresent being. For some reason, the game

I AM THE GOD OF HELLFIRE...





Evil Zone is not afraid of attempting to be epic, in the visual sense. Almost every move occurs with optic-damaging intensity and speed, from the merest punch to the most awesome of the special moves.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Another day begins for an average backbench MP; although apparently in trouble, a friendly group of non-metaphorical fiery tongues should even the odds; Ralph's patented indigestion cure was effective, yet ultimately fatal.

designers saw fit to make it female and give this deity a chest of inhumanely gargantuan proportions. Not that I'm complaining, you understand.

Evil Zone is designed to be 'pick up and play' – a novice should be able to execute some fantastic moves – yet retain enough depth to keep the challenge constant. The visual aspect is a major factor of the game experience and really has to be seen to be truly appreciated. Moves explode into action like a human lightshow, flooding the screen with pyrotechnic splendour. Those that have played *Final Fantasy VII* will be familiar with the way

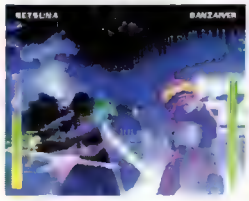
ABOVE: Mmmmmm. Nnnggggg. What a way to asphyxiate!

that it works. When a 'major' move is loosed, the action takes the form of a dramatic cutscene, similar to the summoning of materia. The camera sways and zooms as the screen explodes with activity. This is all so seamless and quick that it leaves your mind reeling, wondering if you actually saw that, or simply imagined it. At best, the moves resemble something directly from manga at its most outlandish. Each hyper-pugilist has the option to 'charge' themselves, opening up a range of über-attacks.

I Spit On Your Dojo

Evil Zone may be eye-candy, but is it pabulum for the mind? The answer is no. Evil Zone does not attempt to engage the brain and works well because of this. Some may find the lack of moves somewhat restrictive, yet there are enough to make for a varied fight, and each has a specific purpose and is not there purely to improve the number of moves available.

The fighters themselves are a disparate and entertaining bunch with more variety than a newsagents' top shelf. Each fighter moves well on screen and offers an arsenal of impressive and destructive moves. As is expected, every character has their own agenda for fighting, described in the Boxout. One curious fact is that there is no jump command, with the up and down controls moving your player into and out of the screen. It may offend some fighting fans, yet opens up a range of tactical possibilities. All the usual options are available – two player, survival, practice – meaning that nothing has been neglected. This could be the biggest headrush since the explosion at the poppers factory. S



KNOW YOUR ENEMY

LAiNDO

Laindo is insane and obsessed with the occult, drawing on black magic for his power, and probably old Judas Priest records played backwards. This guy killed his parents and loves to score crack to cure his depression, seemingly having never heard of The Samaritans.

ALTY

A court magician whose parents died when he was a child. Why that fact is important is beyond me. Magic and distance attacks are the key to success with this pre-pubescent killing machine.

KEiYA

A man with a huge sword who lives by Oriental philosophy. When did Confucius advocate violent swordplay? Only using his power for altruistic ends, this do-gooder wants the universe to become Tellytubby land.

ERiL

A mercenary from Nephilim, presumably a place where breast implants are allocated at birth. Described as having 'moral values', such as murder and immolation, one assumes.

DANZAiVA

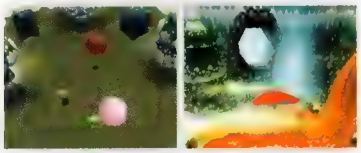
The leader of a galactic defence system, aiming to protect the good people of the cosmos. If cops were cool, they'd be this guy. Especially with his lack of regard for the Miranda contract.

SETSUNA

Every game needs a schoolgirl. So Gary Glitter might say. Setsuna protects the innocent from the scourge of the Dark World and is empowered in combat by a form of ethereal guardian angel.

BITE ME

By nature crocodiles are carnivorous and unruly. What if they were cute and decided to employ their anus a weapon...?



CROC 2

PUBLISHER: Fox Interactive
DEVELOPER: Argonaut Software
RELEASE DATE: June
GAME TYPE: Cutesy Platformer
PAL Percentage Complete: 90%

EARLY VERDICT

Croc 2: For

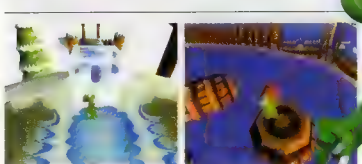
Liquorice-sweet mix of invigorating visuals and simplistic yet involving gameplay. Not just for the younger gamer by any means.

Croc 2: Against

Aforementioned liquorice-sweet game may induce nausea and skin irritation in some ardent rationalist/dullard gamers.

Anticipation Rating: 75%

The PlayStation is still yearning for a defining platform title. Could Croc 2 be that elusive messiah?



"It's faster, cooler, deeper and bigger. Should be sweet."

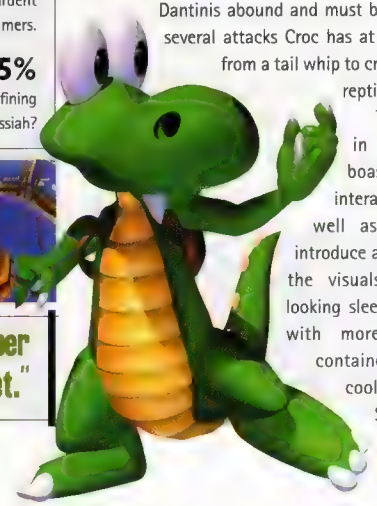
After only a single game, Croc has amassed himself quite some kudos. The previous outing caught cynical gamers unaware with its fusion of childlike appeal and demonic gameplay. The fact that it still sells well on platinum is testimony to this fact. Having rid the world of Baron Dante and emancipated the muff-like Gobbos, though, Croc now has a new crisis; family. It may sound like a banal Jap RPG, but the synopsis of Croc 2 is the quest for his natural parents, doubtless bolstered with a healthy dose of 'God Bless America' and non-smoking morality.

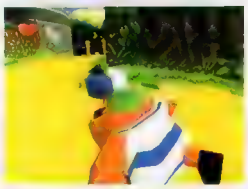
Shut Your Gobbo

The Gobbos return in Croc 2, this time in the guise of individual tribes, each with certain characteristics and traits, all of which are essential to complete Croc's quest. Croc will have to perform certain tasks for each tribe to win their assistance and unlock further recesses of the game. The control system has been overhauled too, making for a wider variety of character moves via a simple control interface.

No modern game is complete without a smattering of violence, and even Croc is capable of murder. The malicious Dantinis abound and must be 'silenced' via one of the several attacks Croc has at his disposal, which range from a tail whip to crushing them with his scaly reptilian arse, Mario style.

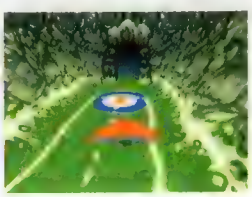
The levels are resplendent in immersive 3D glory, boasting more scenery interaction than previously, as well as hordes of puzzles to introduce a cerebral element. Overall, the visuals have been improved, looking sleeker and more psychedelic with more and diverse themes contained therein. It's faster, cooler, deeper and bigger. Should be sweet.

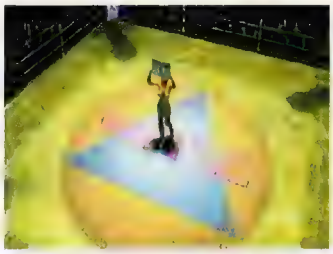
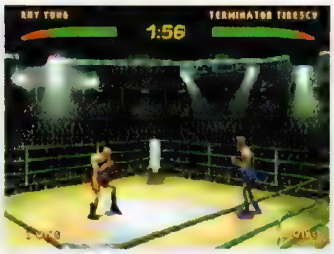


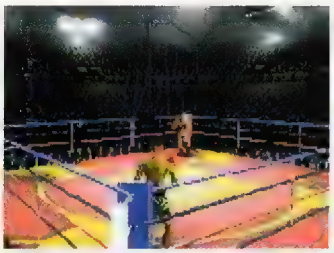


Angry: What bad grammar they've writ. Ain't any good, is that.

Arrogant: He may sneer now, but a reptilian arse is about to make him as flat as PaRappa.

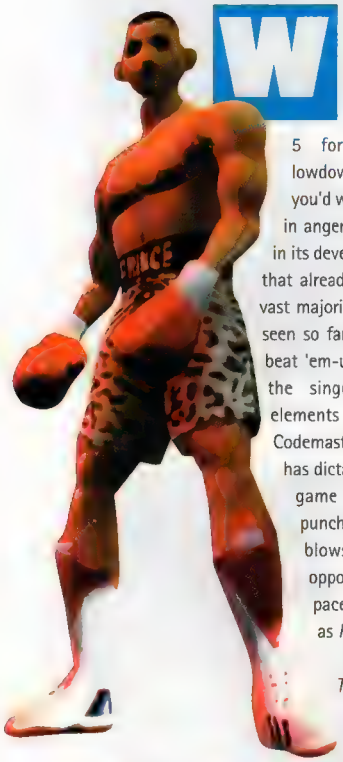




BRUISED AROUND THE RING

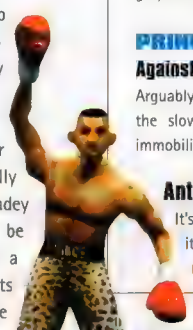
Undefeated, cocksure and a hit with a ladies: that's just our Dazza of course, but even he has respect for Nas and his accompanying videogame.



We've just received some hot-off-the-disc-burner preview code for this virtually guaranteed blockbuster game from Codemasters (see issue 5 for a big-hitting four-page lowdown) so we naturally assumed you'd want to hear how the fella plays in anger, even at this two-thirds point in its development. You'll be glad to hear that already it's arguably superior to the vast majority of PSX boxing games we've seen so far, with the focus on providing beat 'em-up paced play whilst retaining the singular flavour and strategic elements of the sport. As ever the Codemasters' ethos of 'Pure Playability' has dictated the direction in which the game has evolved, with snappy punches and whirlwind exchanges of blows the recurring themes, as opposed to the decidedly lumpen-paced fisticuffs seen in games such as *Knockout Kings*.

Blocking comes via the *Tekken*-esque 'pull-back' method, while a neat and pacey body-swerve sits on the shoulder buttons, backed up by a vital side-step shuffle to help those wishing to float like a butterfly. To get away from being stuck on the ropes a push away move is available, while throwing a blow during a quick step forwards triggers a lunging punch that causes increased damage, but can leave a fighter dangerously open to counterattack if successfully dodged. As well as this there's also the slightly arcadey Power Punches (unique to each character) that can be stored and unleashed on unsuspecting targets when a flaming glove icon appears, although at this point its arrival is a touch random and can serve to unbalance the game too much in the favour of the winning character. STOP PRESS – Codemasters announced just before going to press that it is going to invest a further three months of development time into PNB, with respect to improving and alleviating many of the criticisms listed above. Nice one, fellas! 6

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Nas says 'Halo' to this bruiser, charmingly named Mauler Miller; office favourite Slick Daddy Ellis looks rangy but is surprisingly powerful.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: This Ming the Merciless clone has a punch as nasty as his goatee, and agility to match; oh dear, this is an unfamiliar sight. Nas hitting the deck? Better not show him this screenshot...

PRINCE NASEEM BOXING

PUBLISHER: Codemasters
DEVELOPER: In-House
RELEASE DATE: September
GAME TYPE: Sports Sim
PAL Percentage Complete: 65%

EARLY VERDICT

PRINCE NASEEM BOXING: For
Already highly playable, with smart, quick graphics and a peppy rhythm.

PRINCE NASEEM BOXING: Against
Arguably needs a wider variety of 'special' moves, the slower-paced characters can be virtually immobilised with repeated jabs.

Anticipation Rating: 85%
It's bound to be polished to a high sheen by its release, but even in this comparatively rough form it's a blast.

FIGHTER'S DESTINY

As well as the toe-to-toe combat there is now an almost-mandatory management sim aspect that sees you train and hone a boxer over time, climbing ranking ladders and so forth.

"As ever the Codemasters' ethos of 'Pure Playability' has dictated the direction in which the game has evolved..."

GOING DOWNHILL FAST

Leave the gas guzzlers at home and climb aboard your trusty two wheeler for a far from sedate romp around the countryside...

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Lovely sliding action you have there my son, keep up the good work; passing the finish line to in a record time to receive a share of the glory; fortunately it's not all about ugly blokes with big calves you know; tussling for the lead on one of the safer parts of the track – free of rocks and branches.

NO FEAR DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN BIKING

PUBLISHER: Codemasters
DEVELOPER: UDS
RELEASE DATE: July
GAME TYPE: Racing
PAL Percentage Complete: 80%

EARLY VERDICT

NO FEAR DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN BIKING: For

A breath of fresh air, giving an original and interesting slant on the oversaturated racing genre.

NO FEAR DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN BIKING: Against

Like snowboarding and skateboarding games before, mountain biking titles have a limited audience.

Anticipation Rating 80%

If it looks good and plays fast then the idea is an interesting one for those bored with regular racers.

Mention biking to me and I instantly revert back to the rose tinted, BMX filled childhood days bombing around on my California Trax whilst my little buddies lag behind, getting incredible speed out of their worn out Choppers. The only specialist gear I needed was a little bell with an Indian on it and a dark blue pair of Spiderman gloves. Things have changed a tad since my day though and now biking is a high octane dangerous ride into oblivion, as this game will prove.

Mountain Cycle Emptiness

This first title dedicated to this precarious sport arrives with the co-operation of No Fear, the sports brand most closely associated with speedy excitement. To use their words, here is a title which gives you the chance to 'Face your fears, Live your dreams'. While playing the ever increasing number of car racing titles out there the biggest concern is keeping up speed, passing the

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Since a turbo is out of the question for these naturally aspirated machines, gravity is on hand to help achieve a quick start; a rolling stone may gather no moss, but your knees may well get a bit green in the forest sections.

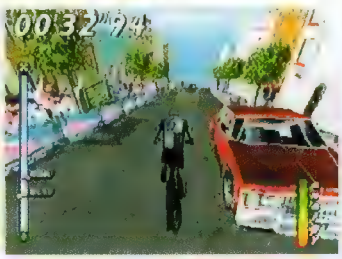
opposition and hitting the finishing line, No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking adds extra layers to the formula as one wrong move will see you fly over the handlebars and kiss the asphalt, yet if you decide to be more conservative and watch your velocity you will find the other competitor flying past you quicker than Superman being chased by a Kryptonite train. Yes, your cycle does come fitted with brakes, but you will only find yourself turning to them as a last resort once you have mastered screaming around the very tight corners without losing your lead.

The physics of a real bike have been translated onto the PlayStation to add realism and complexity. Extensive video footage was viewed and the handling was carefully studied, so everything is how it should be, right down to the ability to lean forwards and backwards to change the centre of balance.

On Yer Bike

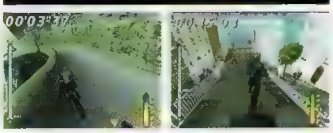
Once you have perfected the art of not falling on your arse, you will be ready to enjoy the large number of options available. Unlike a lot of racing games, it promises just as much fun for the solo gamester as for the multiplayer. In single race mode, every track is available for you to battle against an intelligent computer-controlled opponent. Time trial mode pits you against the clock and best of all, a championship mode gives you the chance to race various opponents and receive upgrades for your machine. Each of the three difficulty levels will feature a different championship, thus increasing the life of the game. For multiplayers it offers a tournament mode in which you get points for victories on various trails and also a duel mode where only the winner survives to race another day.

With tricks to perform and a myriad of characters all with their own unique personalities, No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking looks set to provide enough challenge and variety for even the most critical of bicycle lovers.



EVERYBODY NEEDS OPTIONS

Bored of the one player mode and looking for some more challenge and variety? Firstly grab a nearby buddy and thrash them in split screen mode. Next, if you're feeling really confident, change to the handlebar viewpoint and experience a much tougher test.



WHAT A SET-UP!

There are many features which can affect your biking performance and you cannot blame the console for your inability to win, as the make-up of the bike is completely in your hands. Everything from the wheels to the frame can be manipulated and should you pick the wrong combination, you may find yourself with a one way ticket to the land of the big fat loser, where children will laugh and pelt you with sticks...

"Watch your velocity and find the other competitor flying past you quicker than Superman chased by a Kryptonite train."

ABOVE: Tired of the road? Well take the stairs then, dummy!

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Oh, the indignity of it all, being taken from behind by a pooch (overtaken that is!); if only you had the time to enjoy the view, but stopping here is not a good idea; pick up the boxes which litter the tracks to get cool stuff.

THE KIDS LOVE SPEED

They're fearless, they're funny, they're swift, they're super-deformed and they're speeding your way soon.

SPEED FREAKS

PUBLISHER: Sony
DEVELOPER: Funcom
RELEASE DATE: July
GAME TYPE: Racing
PAL Percentage Complete: 80%

EARLY VERDICT

SPEED FREAKS: For
At last, a racing game that doesn't take itself seriously, bring on the crazy competitors!

SPEED FREAKS: Against
Like hot sticky fudge sauce, this may be too sickly sweet for some tastes.

Anticipation Rating: 85%
Most PlayStation titles tend to be simulations, so it will be a breath of fresh air to see some cartoon antics.

> "...something cutesy comes this way and it looks stunning."

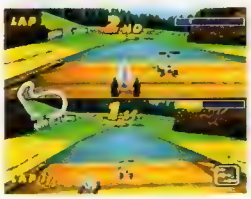
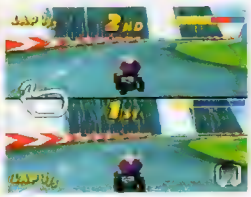
The unwritten rule in the console bible seems to be that if you want your games gritty and realistic, you go for Sony's little grey box of magic; whereas if you are younger, fluffier and your favourite colour is candy floss pink, you get your hands on the big N's machine. Well, douse me in sugar and call be Betty, at last something cutesy comes this way and it looks stunning.

Speed Freaks takes the basic racing premise and adds a cute sheen, with characters ranging from doe-eyed girlies to Chip, the motoring dog – I kid you not. Each league of competition features four tracks, ranging from jungle locales to more conventional race circuits, although even these have quirky short cuts such as zipping through a pirate ship conveniently placed next to the battleground.

The handling of the cars is extremely accurate and each character has their own specific weight to add into the equation, meaning that you must initially decide between a slow start and a steady course, or a swift beginning followed by precarious steering. One über-cart even accommodates two characters, to give it superb road handling in even the toughest conditions. As well as competing against all of the computer opponents, you can play any track head-to-head against a friend and then try your luck at the timer mode: in which you attempt to achieve a fastest lap time by chasing the ghost kart of the character who holds the current record.

With the essential ingredients of speed and style and more colours than a very big kaleidoscope indeed, Speed Freaks may prove to be one of the most enjoyable treats of the year.

ABOVE: The terrains show plenty of variation including tunnels and waterfronts.

BELOW: The start of the race is a melange of cars, crashes and cartoon style breaks for the lead.

PLENTY OF CHARACTER

In terms of gender equality in videogames, Speed Freaks must be top of the tree as the selectable characters include boys, girls, dogs and even robots.

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Rayman
Resident Evil 1 and 2
Rollcage
Ridge Racer Type 4
Rolt Cage
Rugrats
Spyro the Dragon
Tai Fu
Theme Hospital
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PLAYED AND RATED

[46] – OMEGA BOOST [50] – HARD EDGE [51] – PUMA STREET SOCCER [52] – ANNA KOURNIKOVA'S SMASH COURT TENNIS [54] – SPORTSCAR GT [55] – NEED FOR SPEED ROAD CHALLENGE [56] – BIG AIR [57] – WINGOVER 2 [58] – COOL BOARDERS 2 (PLAT.) [58] – PRO 18 WORLD TOUR GOLF [59] – BLOODLINES [59] – CRASH BANDICOOT 2 (PLAT.) [60] – HEART OF DARKNESS (PLAT.) [60] – FINAL FANTASY VII (PLAT.) [61] – TRIPLE PLAY 2000 [61] – GRAN TURISMO (PLAT.) [62-67] – IMPORT SECTION

TELEVISION... DRUG OF THE NATION

The final ratings in STATiON are presented as percentages. if you want to know what these marks represent, take a look at the explanations and televisual equivalents...

95-100%
The Simpsons: A golden disc of absolute pleasure, pretty much as perfect as you can get, in fact it may cause you to explode with delight. Lovely.

90-94%
EastEnders: A fantastic piece of software but just falls short of universal accolade.

80-89%
Ally McBeal: A well made game that will have fans of the genre squealing with pleasure, but it's not for everyone.

70-79%
Sabrina, The Teenage Witch: A good title but it lacks a certain element which separates it from the big players.

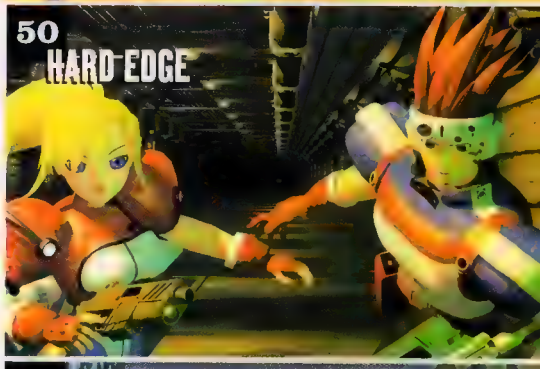
60-69%
Emmerdale: Still a playable game but unfortunately it has rather too many flaws to be liked by most.

50-59%
Dawson's Creek: May look good initially but it soon displays its weaknesses and shouldn't be at the top of your list.

40-49%
Prisoner Cell Block H: Oh dear, oh dear, far too many things wrong with it, how did this get released in such a form? Who's responsible?

20-39%
The Munsters Today: Very, very poor and anyone who buys it will be crying into their beer with absolute regret.

0-19%
Eldorado: A piece of work which shouldn't even be called a game. Utterly unplayable, your grey box will vomit in disgust. Avoid.



TRUST THE TRIPLE A

In this crazy world ruled by weak-minded marketing men and their loathsome ilk there's not much you can trust anymore, apart from STATiON's glittering Triple A badge that is. It's our personal guarantee of worthiness in the field of excellence, and any game achieving this Oscar-belittling award deserves a space on your shelf with no messing, sonny Jim. We've built a shrine in the office to the Triple A that we all kneel before every lunchtime, y'know.

STATION
TRIPLE A TITLE

TALKING PAGES

Here is a quick guide to what to expect on the pages of STATION's Played and Rated section:

- **INFO BOX**

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis **DEVELOPER:** Attention To Detail **RELEASE DATE:** May **GAME TYPE:** Future Racing
NO OF PLAYERS: 1-2 **PRICE:** £39.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog, Steering Wheel

All you could possibly need to know at a glance about the title in question, technical speaking, that is. Who made it, what's it worth and can i play it with a friend?

PLAYED AND RATED INDEX

46 OMEGA BOOST
Big loud exciting shooty shooty action.

50 HARD EDGE
Resident Evil style adventure fun.

51 PUMA STREET SOCCER
Take your ball out on the streets and score some goals.

52 ANNA KOURNIKOVA'S S.C.T.
Fancy a game, love? I'll just get me racket.

54 SPORTSCAR GT
Get your motor running, head out on the highway. Drive fast.

55 NEED FOR SPEED RC
Brrrm, brrrm, more speedy car driving tomfoolery.

56 BIG AIR
Snowboarding time, so put on your best stupid trousers.

57 WINGOVER 2
Flying tonight, plane and simple... ho,ho.

SMALL REVIEWS

58 COOL BOARDERS 2 [PLAT.]
More knarly snowboard antics – for under £20

58 PRO 18 WORLD TOUR GOLF
Give your ball a good whacking and try and get it in the hole.

59 BLOODLINES
Isometric arcade thrills with a bit of combat thrown in.

59 CRASH BANDICOOT 2 [PLAT.]
The cool cute creature comes again, this time on platinum.

60 HEART OF DARKNESS [PLAT.]
Platform thrills with nice graphics and a low price tag.

60 FINAL FANTASY VII [PLAT.]
The king of RPGs gets a new lease of life with a lower price.

61 TRIPLE PLAY 2000
The Americans love baseball, but do we like the game...?

61 GRAN TURISMO [PLAT.]
The godfather of the driving genre.

IMPORT REVIEWS

62 Thirteen import game reviews from Japan and the US, including: *Rockin' Riders, Kitty The Kool, Legend of Lagaia, Chocobo Racing* and *Air Race Championship.*

KINGS OF THE WILD FRONTIER

OMEGA BOOST

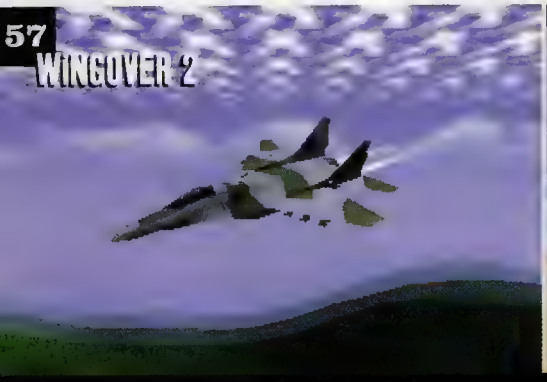
Sony bring out the big guns and big excitement in this shoot everything that moves title. Huge explosions, creeping tension and crazy enemies are the order of the day as you fly through space trying not to get vapourised.

PUMA STREET SOCCER

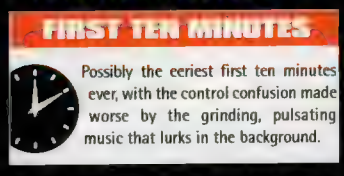
You may think that the PlayStation needs another football game about as much as you need a hole in the head, but this game promises to take the genre somewhere different, moving the action out of the arena and into the parking lots.

ANNA KOURNIKOVA'S SMASH COURT TENNIS

Whether you want the normal game or a quirky variation such as the intriguing sounding 'Bomb Ball', this arcade take on the sport promises to deliver. Will it prove hard to fault?

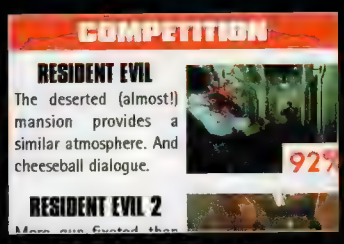


• FIRST TEN MINUTES


FIRST TEN MINUTES
Possibly the eeriest first ten minutes ever, with the control confusion made worse by the grinding, pulsating music that lurks in the background.

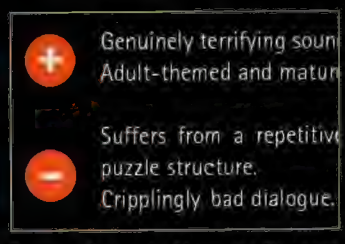
Do first impressions really count? Is it love at first sight or instant repulsion? Find out here.

• THE COMPETITION



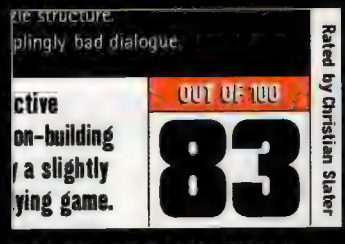
Life is full of choices. Whatever the review score, there may be an alternative to the game in question, and this is where you will find it.

• PLUS/MINUS

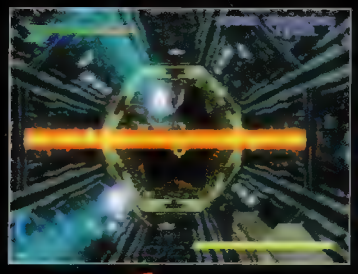
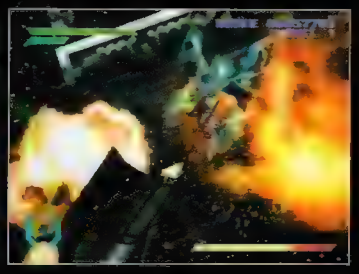
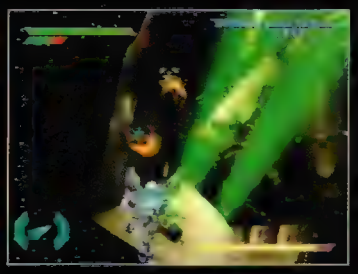
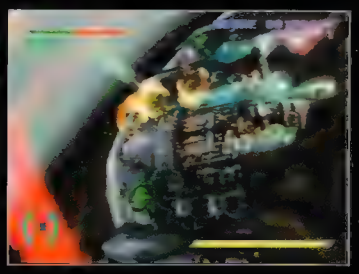


Reasons why you should consider this game, reasons why you should be wary.

• SCOREBOX



This is what you're looking for. This is the country's most respected PlayStation magazine score: 100% unofficial, 100% unbiased, 100% honest!

EXCLUSIVE!

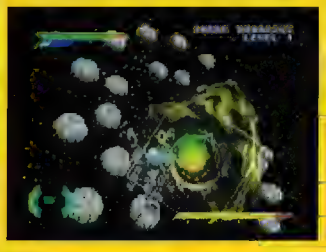
OMEGA BOOST

PUBLISHER: Sony **DEVELOPER:** Polyphony Digital **RELEASE DATE:** June **GAME TYPE:** Shoot 'em-up
NO OF PLAYERS: One **PRICE:** £34.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Dual Shock Analog, Memory Card

FIRST TEN MINUTES

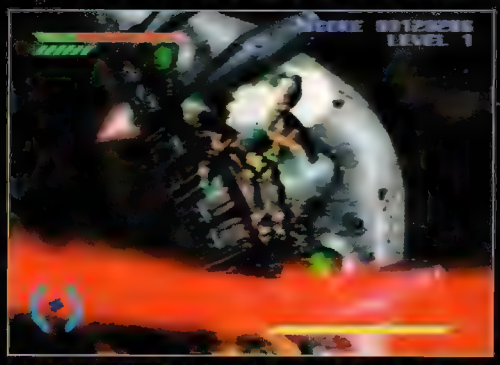
Where is all the stuff to shoot? There I was, dawdling through the quiet of deserted intergalactic battlefields when – oh wait... BOOM!

ORGANIC STREET PREACHERS



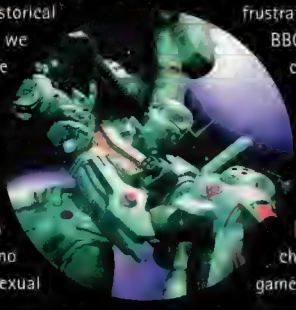
Taking its cue from the classic Bydo aliens in the R-Type series, many of the opponents in Omega Boost appear extremely ominous, almost as if they are living breathing creatures. The 'heart' of this enemy glows and shows where to shoot, hit anywhere else and your bullets will be ineffective. Weave around the obstacles and do some damage, soldier!

Men in suits flying around, destroying things. Either the STATION boys on a Friday night or a new space adventure...

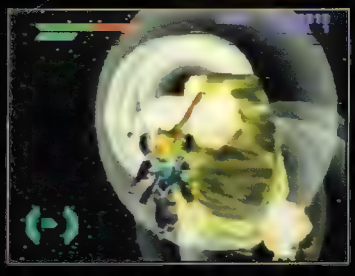
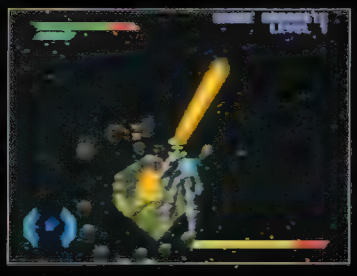
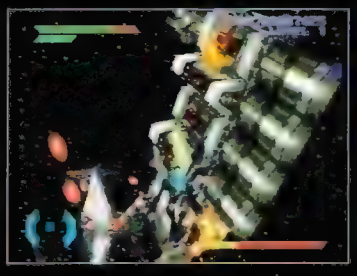
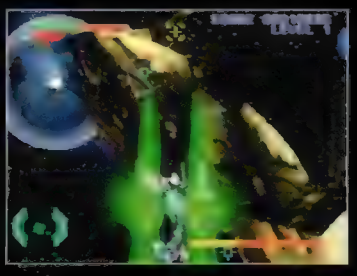


LEFT TO RIGHT: In terms of size and power, something in our hero is sadly lacking. My advice – run away very fast; take aim, shoot, hit the enemy in the right spot and watch a lovely firework display as it explodes into nothing.

Come with me on an historical tour of gamesplaying, as we take a look through rose tinted spectacles at things that existed when we were young. We go way back into the past, before Sony's glorious über-console jumped into the ring, and we discover that in these dark ages gamers were split into two camps. The more cerebral guy (for there were no females of the species in these days of acute sexual frustration) would be at home, playing with his little BBC Micro, engrossed in a space exploration title called *Elite*. 'It's the best game in the world' he would bleat whilst spending an hour flying through space dotted only with a few bright pixels, sorry, stars.



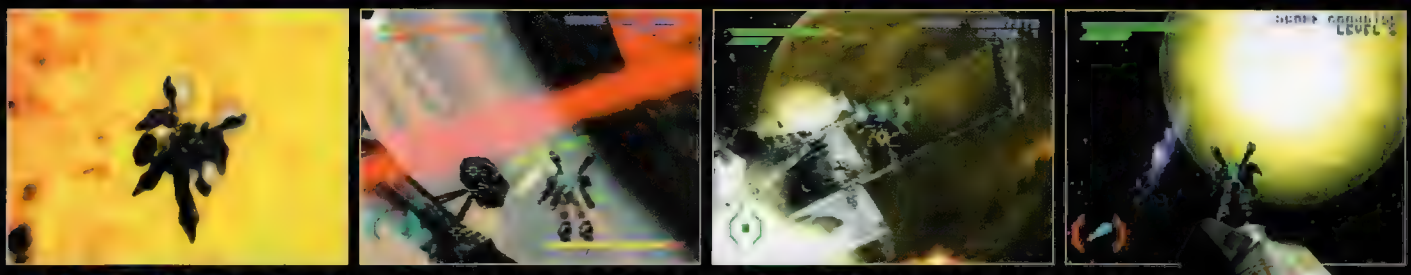
Those of us who wanted action, however, were down the arcade, failing to impress the ladies with our prowess in the video arena, chucking ten pences into *Space Harrier*, a bizarre game in which one became a cool space super hero,

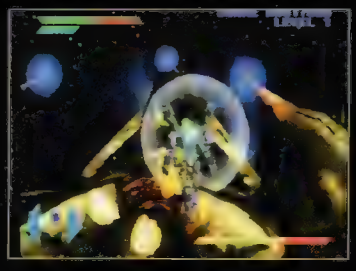
"There is a good feeling of trepidation when a new metal leviathan materialises..."

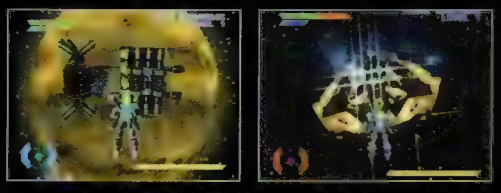
LIGHTS, CAMERA, ALMOST ACTION

Turn on the PlayStation and you may find yourself fooled into believing that you have actually loaded up a DVD sci-fi epic, as the whole background of the game is explained in an initial movie featuring the necessary cheesy actors, ominous voices and big great robot thingys. Don't get slack though, the game is coming... Play!

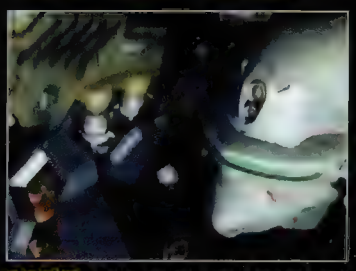


LEFT TO RIGHT: Our pilot leaves the house, tragically without remembering to turn the gas off. Foolish boy; admire the sunset then blow some stuff up; mete out death and destruction. Or, put plainly, kick ass!; that's no moon, it's a... oops, I stand corrected. It is a moon.



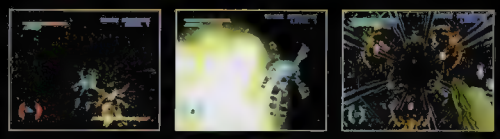


ABOVE: Although difficult to convey in a screenshot, the dynamic lighting effects are phenomenal.



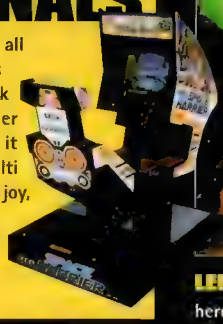
ABOVE: Fully suited and booted and looking like some mutant creation from Jean-Paul Gaultier.

"...while not exactly brimming with variety, there is much pleasure to be had just blowing stuff up..."



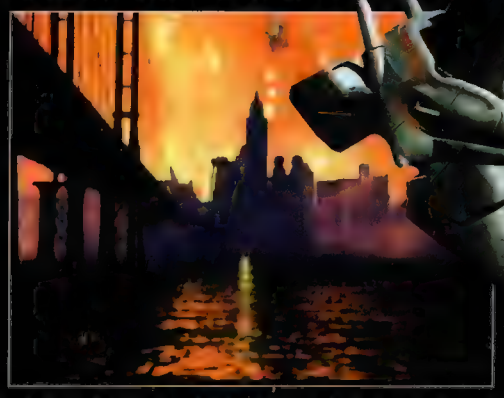
ARCADE ORIGINALS

In an age when all arcade machines were merely tall black boxes, Space Harrier was a revelation as it was housed in a multi coloured cabinet of joy, and you could sit down as you played. Ah, nostalgia.

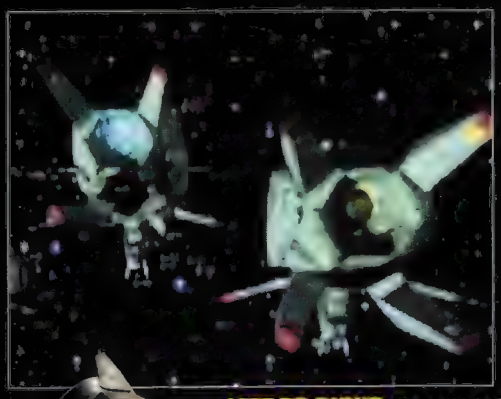


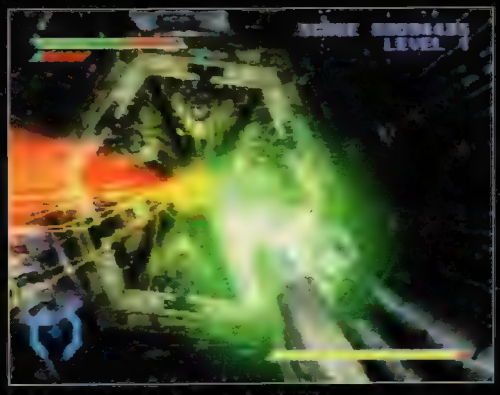
like Buck Rogers, flying around on a mission to shoot whatever oddities came your way. Not only was it an original game, but it was so smart that it also came with a seat belt and made you feel intensely involved in the on-screen destruction.

Now, fast forward to the present where these two games have been melded together like some console Frankenstein's monster to produce an exploring shoot 'em-up, but in which the arcade elements mostly shine through. Omega Boost sees you flying around the solar system destroying anything that gets in your way, which is mostly bizarre looking metallic ships that hover, armed and dangerous, doing everything in their power to end your career by blowing you into tiny pieces. Not only that, but the inventiveness of the game transcends mere automated goons. Some of these dominate an entire screen, ranging from vast Gundam-style suits to organic sandworms that undulate below the surface before leaping forth for an attack. The more bizarre enemies are



LEFT TO RIGHT: Call me neurotic but I get the idea that something really nasty is about to happen here...; people living here might want to call their estate agents and get the hell out of town





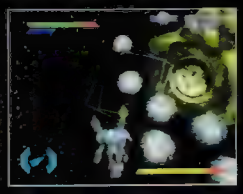
LEFT TO RIGHT: The calm before the storm as you and your cyber buddies head out into the unknown; and then it's into the thick of it, all guns a-blazin'!

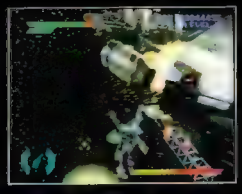
straight out of a techno-nightmare and certainly disturb as they float around ominously.

Boom Shalack Lack Boom!

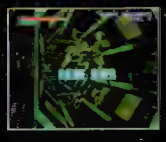
Unlike the usual shooter where the enemy is automatically thrown in front of you, ready to kick some cyber-butt, Omega Boost first gives you the task of traversing the galaxy to find your opponent. This is an interesting twist on the genre and should help expand the game's audience beyond those who live for instant thrills. Once you have followed the on-screen compass and flown to the correct co-ordinates, you will be rewarded with a session of heavy button bashing. Various camera views give it a movie feel and help to increase involvement in the violent explosions. Explosions that look almost photo-realistic, appealing to the pyromaniac in all of us, the small sadistic part that so revelled in pulling the legs off of defenceless spiders and torching ants with a magnifying glass.

Especially nice is the way the light glimmers and reflects off your own suit and weapons, showing the extent of the comprehensive game design. The only frustration that occasionally pops up is





"...camera views give it a movie feel and help to increase involvement..."



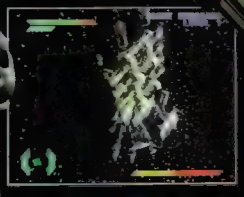
that sometimes you will begin an attack and then lose the enemy, meaning flying around the screen in hope of catching them again. It may be a slight niggle, but the plus side is that it adds to the sense of panic as you hurtle around, in search of the foe, knowing that at any moment it could atomise you. Besides, it can be combated by practice and a little luck.

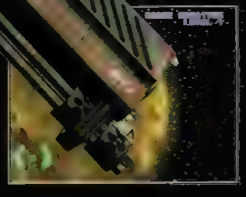
Fire It Up!

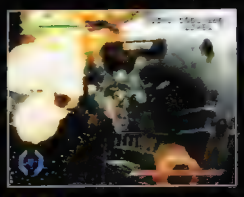
As the game progresses, the enemies get bigger and more impressive and there is a good feeling of trepidation when a new metal leviathan materialises. The weapons available are not overly numerous, but one arm *is* able to lock on to the prone points of an enemy's fuselage. Thing is, you have to fly reasonably close to be able to do so, giving the option of playing it safe with the standard weapons or risking the more direct approach.

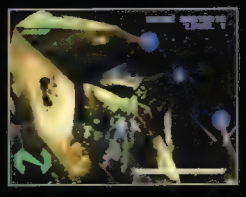
The game is not exactly brimming with variety, but there is much pleasure to be had just blowing stuff up and it is refreshing to play a game where brute force is the order of the day and you can just give your brain the evening off. One particularly impressive level sees you speeding through a claustrophobic tunnel full of mechanised armaments. The sides totter closer as sentry guns spew forth lasers and pillars have to be deftly flown over or under. It calls to mind the Death Star assault in *Star Wars*.

True, it doesn't push the boundaries of gameplay or take the PlayStation to new technological heights, but then again it doesn't need to, as the name of the game is addictiveness and Omega Boost has it in spades. One of the best blasters to appear on the PlayStation and for more than a few hours of post-alcoholic chill, it is most certainly worth a look. **5**



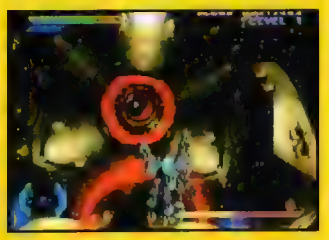






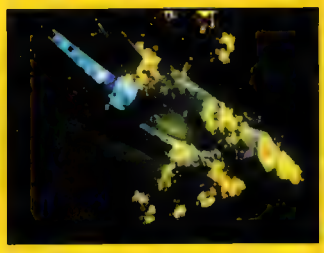
LEFT: As the screen explodes in an incandescent blur, it is apparent all the ingredients for a classic are present.

IT'S A BLAST!



As the game progresses the strength and scale of the enemy increase dramatically. This evil piece of work fills the entire screen and is gonna take more than a few shots to dispose of. Maximum firepower is called for, oh yes.

BANGS AND CRASHES



If there is one essential component in a good shoot 'em-up, it is the big explosion; and Omega Boost does not disappoint on this front. Fire! Fire! huh-huh-huh.

COMPETITION

MECH WARRIOR

Big robots touting big guns provide distraction for a while. Overall a little disappointing.

R-TYPES

Scrolling retro blasting fun, now superseded by the fantastic *R-Type Delta*, see our guide!

STATION

+ Good old fashioned blaster action should warm the hearts of many with its simplistic charm, fast and furious duels.

– Action is sporadic, coming in fits and bursts, and the question remains: retro, or old fashioned?

TRIPLE A TITLE

Like *Battlestar Galactica* – slightly dated idea but a hell of a lot of fun.

OUT OF 100

90

Rated by Kendall Lacey

HARD EDGE

PUBLISHER: Sunsoft **DEVELOPER:** In-House **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Survival Cyberpunk
NO OF PLAYERS: One **PRICE:** £39.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog

FIRST TEN MINUTES

No doubt about it, Hard Edge steals the 'ham-acting' trophy from *Resident Evil*. The introduction sequence is comedy of Pythonic proportions.

THE OLD SWITCHEROO

One more factor is that, as the characters separate, you can switch between them, adding depth to the 'puzzle' element. Some doors can only be opened by the other character, for example. It could have been better utilised, but it is creative.

COMPETITION

RESIDENT EVIL
The game that spawned a genre and introduced the concept of apprehension and fear to gaming.
92%

SILENT HILL
Take the *Resident Evil* mentality and apply it to an entire town. You shoot zombie-babies, too...
83%

STATION

\+ Fans of the irrepressible *Ressi-Evil* will quiver in anticipation; should be as welcome as a beer in the Sahara.

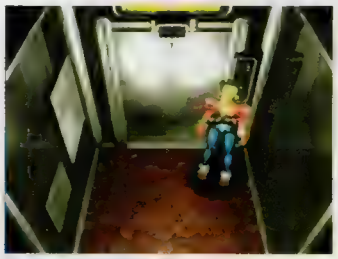
– We've seen *Ressi-Evil*. We've seen *Ressi-Evil 2*. Do we need this title when *Silent Hill* is drawing inexorable closer?

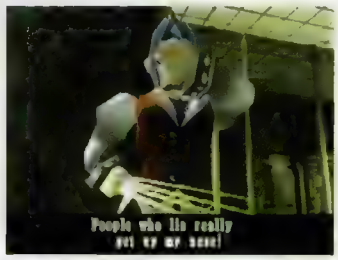
Like that quiet girl at school nobody fancied: somewhat dull, but will be enjoyed by some.

OUT OF 100
71

Rated by Nick White

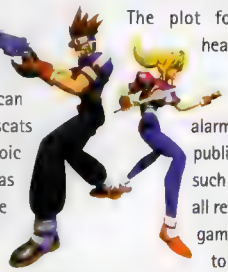
Our fate rests upon a man with ridiculous hair and a woman in an unnecessarily tight thong. We're doomed...





LEFT TO RIGHT: Just how will that thong combat injustice? Dunno, looks good though; hmmm, a puzzle of chin-stroking proportions. Would it involve a power conduit, mayhaps?; it loses something in the translation, I imagine.

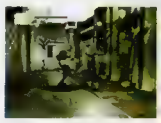
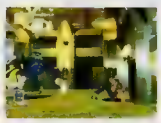
It seems to be a general rule that heroes are doomed to look absurd. Spiderman, Superman, Super Ted; all are prone to severe failings on the image front. How can you combat crime and secure world peace with your scats on over your trousers? Alex and Michelle, the heroic protagonists of Hard Edge, also suffer this fate. Alex has the hairstyle of Nicky Clarke's nightmares and Michelle scampers about in a thong so tight it must surely restrict blood to the legs. Curious...



Soft Centre

The plot focuses upon a terrorist incursion into the headquarters of a corporation, with Michelle and Alex drafted in to neutralise the threat. However, events take a turn for the sinister with alarming speed. The corporation is not as altruistic as the public believed, being involved in perfidious schemes such as war-satellites and inhumane genetic research, all revealed via realtime cutscenes and discoveries as the game progresses, and always just enough for the player to remain tantalised and guessing throughout.

"In theory, the game should be superlative. Reality, however, is not so kind."

ABOVE: Don't just gawp, you erect-headed freak. Kill it like an Eeenglish pigdog.

In theory, the game should be superlative. Reality, however, is not so kind.

Hard Edge is riddled with minor flaws that culminate to tarnish what could have been an accomplished title. Combat is perhaps the prime example, with the dramatic camera angles often being a hindrance, restricting line of sight. Also frustrating and fatal is the aiming system: there is no auto-target facility, leaving you constantly having to make adjustments to your aim as you get assailed from all sides, costing valuable energy. The puzzles in the game are remedial, sticking with the safe formula of find-key-open-door with the occasional object puzzle for good measure. There is no indication of which objects are important, making for much time spent randomly examining everything in each room. This is not exploration, this is tedium, impairing what might have been a game to rival the mighty *Resident Evil*.

LEFT TO RIGHT: This Puma super shot is about to take out our Welsh hero; the Italian whippersnappers sneak one past; arrival home, or new playing field? Your choice.

PUMA STREET SOCCER

PUBLISHER: Sunsoft **DEVELOPER:** Pixelstorm **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Football
NO OF PLAYERS: 1-2 **PRICE:** £34.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog

Here comes another football game, but don't run away yet, it is different, honest.

Some people approach footie games from the simulation angle; gobbling up statistics of how many times Paul Walsh washed his flowing locks, or the number of goals Pele scored whilst running forward standing on one leg with a finger up his nose. These people should stop reading now. Are they gone? Good, let's play. Some of us don't care who played in the '66 England squad, we just want a game we can load and play. Soccer to us means kicking a crappy old ball around the streets with a couple of old socks for goalposts and someone we don't like as the goalie.

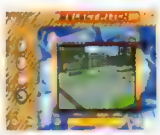
Eat My Goal, That's Liquid Football!

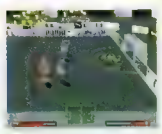
Puma, having more money than your humble journo, have taken this idea and transported it to various locations for their kickaround fun. Airports, city streets and parking lots fulfil the role of stadia while a small crowd cheers you on and the commentator shouts 'Hot Stuff!' as he watches the ball fly past. Each team has only a handful of players, meaning that instead of worrying about tactics you just bang the ball as hard as you can – a yellow bar at the base of the screen builds up until you can unleash a power shot, swift enough to beat the fastest 'keeper.

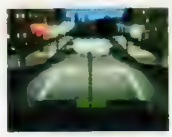
Exhibition games can be played against the team of your choice or you may choose to delve headlong into a whole league season. And whereas in *FIFA* you might expect maybe one or two goals in each game, here you will see the ball fly over the line more times than you can imagine. Playing a single match, I managed to lose 25-10. Not a scoreline you'd see in more serious titles, but this makes Puma Street Soccer more entertaining and it succeeds in keeping your interest long after the final whistle. Result.

ABOVE: Helpful captioning only rubs salt into the wound really. I mean, I know I missed damnit!

"Some of us don't care who played in the '66 England squad, we just want a game we can load and play."







FIRST TEN MINUTES

Easy to get into with very speedy characters, now if I can just score a bleedin' goal.

COMPETITION

SENSIBLE SOCCER
Top down footie action for the nostalgia freak, doesn't quite hack it in the polygonal world.

FIFA '99
Current godfather of the football game. Market leader for some time and very playable too.

STATION

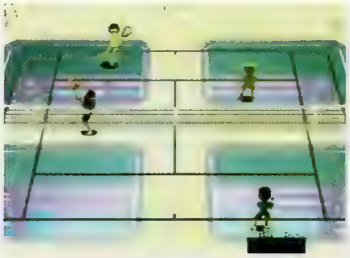
+ Original slant on an oversaturated genre, combined with ease of use for beginners.

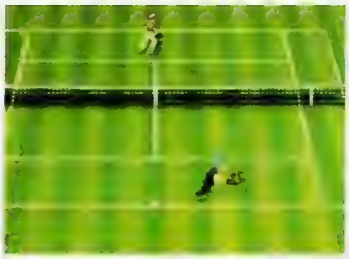
– No real players or stats, probably too simplistic for football trainspotters used to more.

Very playable arcade action for those who want gameplay not reality.

OUT OF 100
80

Rated by Kendall Lacey





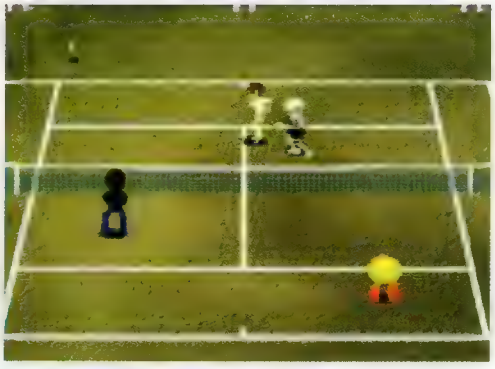
ANNA KOURNIKOVA'S SMASH COURT TENNIS

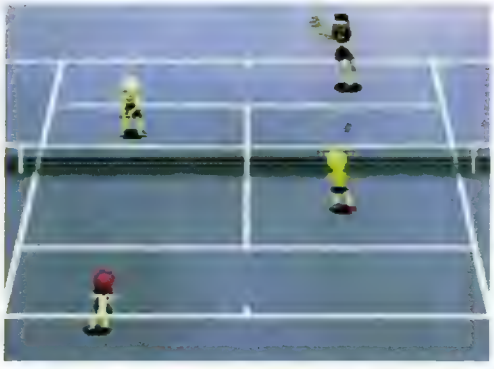
PUBLISHER: Sony **DEVELOPER:** Namco **RELEASE DATE:** June **GAME TYPE:** Tennis Sim
NO OF PLAYERS: 1–4 **PRICE:** £34.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog, Multi-tap

FIRST TEN MINUTES

When the realisation of who Anna Kournikova is finally aces home, your mind becomes free to enjoy the pleasures of 'comedy' tennis

Pac Man and cute girls with balls. Tennis balls, that is. None of that deviant German stuff here, no Vicar...

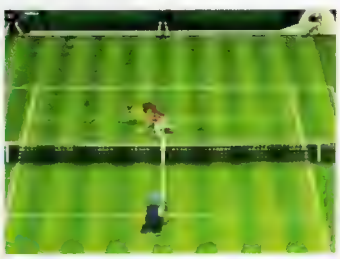




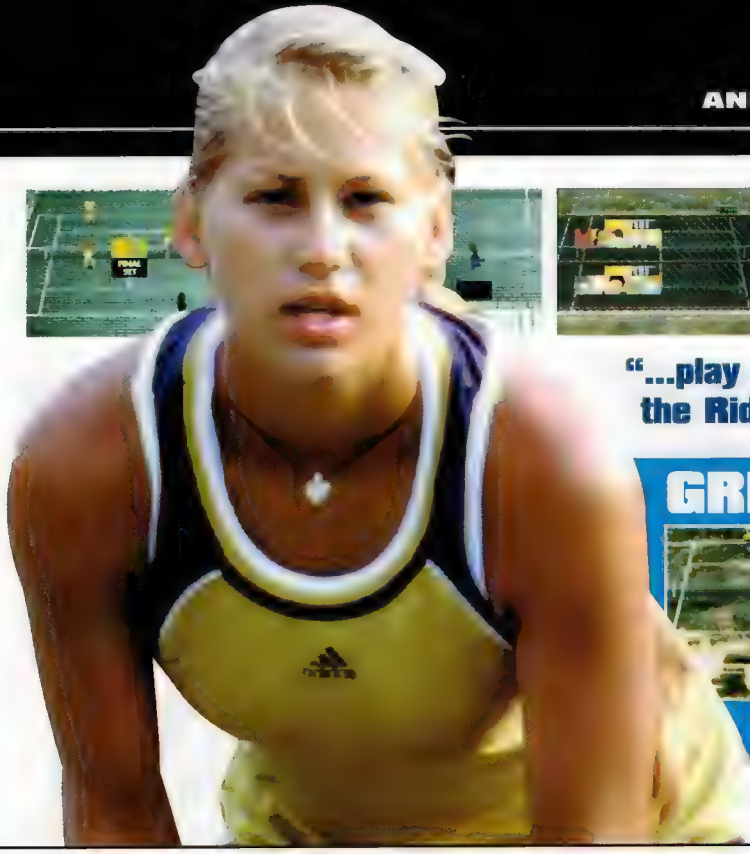
Tennis is a game with a transient appeal, seeming to captivate the nation only during Wimbledon, and then being a tenuous excuse to lounge on the sofa gorging on strawberries and cream. All men know that the real appeal of tennis lies in the svelte female players; more accurately the hours invested watching their skirts ride up as they serve. Anna Kournikova is a prime target for such debased lechery, quite possibly being the reason for her affiliation with this particular title in Europe. Yes, you can play as the teen-prodigal herself; or rather a manga-cute caricature of her, squat and gut-churning cute. Then again, the game also offers you the chance to play as Pac Man, Yoshimitsu, Eddy Gordo and the *Ridge Racer* chick, amongst many others, making poor Kournikova somewhat superfluous in the pantheon of characters. Who could possibly resist the chance of rallying a ball between these seminal legends of gaming?

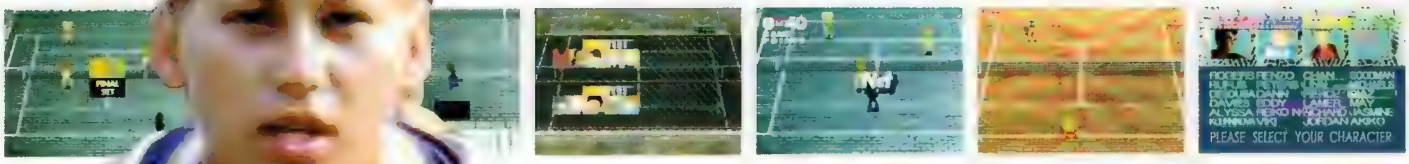
This Cannot Be Serious

The game itself boasts a wealth of options, such as 48 players, 24 selectable from the outset and 24 secret characters, including four versions of Kournikova. Many gamers may expel a petulant sigh of woe at this prospect, believing that the game will have to be



LEFT TO RIGHT: Pac Man Vs Eddy Gordo. Was there ever a greater sporting event?; player motion is fluid and realistic. Difficult to convey in a static screenshot; ahh, so many courts to choose from, so many ground types





"...play as Pac Man, Yoshimitsu, Eddy Gordo and the Ridge Racer chick, amongst many others..."

GREAT BALL-BOYS OF FIRE

Bomb Tennis is irrefutably one of the highlights of this multi-hued game. The scoring is rescinded in favour of having five players in your team. The bomb-ball has a timer which counts down and detonates at zero. The trick being to make sure that the other player is closer to the ball when it does.

completed over and again to reveal the secret characters, one at an agonising time. This assumption could not be further from the truth; the secret characters are amusingly easy to select, the game does not even have to be completed. Naturally, telling you exactly how to unlock them would be tantamount to a heinous crime. Who am I to spoil the surprise?

CELESTE PEACH OWEN XIAOMIN
SASHA TIFFANY ACEA EMILIE
CLARA TABA ROBYN SAM
RED ACE EDDY LAMER COACH
DRAGON REIKO.N RICHARD YOSHIMITSU
HEIHACHI PAC-MAN TROY SHERUDO
PLEASE SELECT YOUR CHARACTER

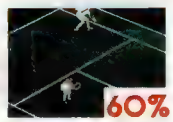
Each player has individual specifications, centered on vital elements such as speed and agility, adding a mildly tactical element into player choice, asides from the usual routine of choosing the player you find the most attractive. Fourteen courts are available, each being a global location such as London, Australia or the USA. As well as the graphical differences between courts, the playing surface also differs, becoming as slippery as a gangland villain or as firm as Kournikova's backside. For the inept and terminally bewildered, a training mode is available, allowing you to practice aimed returns and hone your skills at the multifarious shots available. Play options include two tournaments (Grand Slam and Street), four player pandemonium and the comical Bomb Ball mode in which the ball is in fact an unstable and explosive liability. Char-grilled tennis pro, anybody?

Endless Love

The game mechanics are aimed at accessibility, with enough realism to prevent it from degenerating into a farce that can be mastered with a single stroke. Everything remains true to the SNES origins both in aesthetics and gameplay. Numerous and eclectic shots are elementary to execute, with the shoulder buttons effortlessly adding spin to the ball. So easy are the shots to master that a few hours play can transform even the most remedial of individuals into a deity of tennis proficiency, spinning lobs effortlessly, confounding the opponent. The playing style is apt enough to accommodate both novice and experienced players, being accessible enough to learn rapidly, yet with enough depth to master. Graphically, the game may gain detractors claiming that the look is puerile and basic. Such people speak from an orifice that is not their mouth. The visual aspect of the game is deliberately in the anime stylee, adding to the capers and hi-jinx that occur therein. Truth be told, this game is more than competent aside of the Kournikova licence, being abundant in jest and mirth, and certainly nowhere near as tedious as Tim Henman, the Steve Davies of tennis. Purchase this game forthwith and rediscover a glee previously thought to be exclusively derived from especially potent narcotics. 9

COMPETITION

ACTUA TENNIS



Mediocre sham of a game, lacking soul and passion. The proverbial dregs. Stay well away...

60%

SMASH COURT TENNIS

Whimsical, capricious and downright fun. Will pleasantly pass any rainy afternoon.

87%

STATION

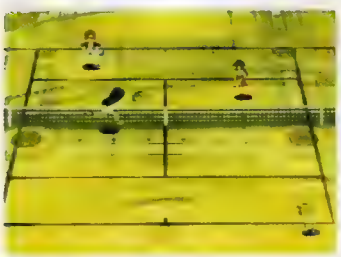
- A tennis game that, for once, does not take itself seriously. The agenda is fun and frolics as opposed to the more sober aspects of the game.
- Simplistic formula may deter tennis purists with no concept of humour. Not a huge advancement from SNES tennis titles.

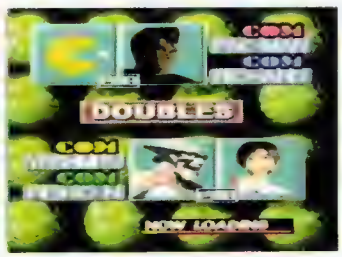
The PlayStation is bereft of 'novelty sports', making this a breath of fresh air.

OUT OF 100

91

Rated by Nick White





LEFT TO RIGHT: In reality, public fourplay would invoke a heavy criminal penalty. Be warned; Pac Man challenges an immobile brick wall for his latest taxing bout; the doubles match to watch out for at this year's Wimbledon. Apparently.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Starting as you mean to go on, at the back; damn that golden Porsche, damn it to hell!; about to crash into a wall. Always unpleasant.

SPORTS CAR GT

PUBLISHER: EA **DEVELOPER:** Point Of View **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Racing
NO OF PLAYERS: 1–2 **PRICE:** £39.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog, Steering Wheel

FIRST TEN MINUTES

Decent selection of cars, easy to get into, good handling, but seems a tad dull.

COMPETITION

MAX POWER RACING
89% One of the few decent recent alternatives to *Gran Turismo*.

RIDGE RACER TYPE 4
84% The latest and best looking in a classic series of arcade racers.

STATION

- Variety of licensed cars to choose from. Nice, accurate control methods.
- Graphically dated, and the bottom line is it's just another average racer.

In a world with *Gran Turismo*, who needs this?

OUT OF 100
46

Rated by Kendall Lacey

Broom broom, strap on your seat belt for another bout of racing tomfoolery. Speed limits not required.

£ A throws its licensed hat into the already crowded racing ring with the release of Sports Car GT. It features tracks from around the world, and includes a number of classic cars such as Porsche, Mercedes and BMW. Not all of these are available to the first time player, as financial resources are limited and races must be won in order to attain the necessary cash to drive certain more exclusive dream machines. Cars can then be finely tuned before beginning the challenge and also modifications may be purchased if you fancy yourself as a bit of a boy racer. This means you must decide whether to purchase a more expensive model or a cheaper, souped-up vehicle.

"...can't decide whether it wants to be a serious racing simulator or an arcade title."

There is an arcade mode if you fancy a quick game as well as the more involved season mode where you can travel around the world looking for glory. With two players a split screen mode is available for multi-car action.

The main problem with the game is that it cannot decide whether it wants to be a serious racing simulator or an arcade title and therefore it falls short of being totally effective as either. The control of the cars is good, being very responsive to the smallest touch, making the cornering very accurate. The graphics on the whole are rather dull and uninspired and mean that the realism of the game falls way short of others on the market. Basically, Sports Car GT just screams 'AVERAGE!' at the top of its shrill voice. The game overall seems highly unnecessary; if you want a serious driving game, you should go for *Gran Turismo* and for those looking for arcade action, stick with any of the *Ridge Racer* titles.

ABOVE: As usual the formula for advancement is to upgrade your motor with prize money.

NEED FOR SPEED ROAD CHALLENGE

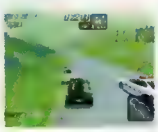
PUBLISHER: EA **DEVELOPER:** In-House **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Driving
NO OF PLAYERS: 1-2 **PRICE:** £39.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog, Steering Wheel

At last! A racing game that injects a new slant into an exhausted genre. Only joking...

LEFT TO RIGHT: The open road and a cool breeze. As you can see, the draw distance is impressive; the replays allow some daunting angles, such as this mutated driver shot; oh well. There goes my no claims bonus. Not to mention most of my limbs and soft extremities; a two player game in Hot Pursuit allows all those Starsky and Hutch fantasies to be finally realised.

Of all the game series in existence, *Need For Speed* has been a constant source of humour with its tangy edge of narcotic insinuation. Admittedly, there was the controversial Japanese title *The Quest of Tat*, but that never saw the shelves of the UK (NOTE: *The Quest of Tat* is a fictional title). What can Need For Speed Road Challenge offer the connoisseur of racing simulation games, obese from a feast of *Gran Turismo* and *Ridge Racer Type 4*? By direct comparison to these paragon titles, Need For Speed Road Challenge is something of a shrinking violet. Taken on its own gestalt merits, however, it's a competent racing title, if derivative to the Nth degree.

"The tracks themselves maintain a certain cucumber cool, swaying and undulating smoothly..."



CHASE HQ-TASTIC!

Hot Pursuit mode puts you in the role of either a maverick speedster or a hard-nosed cop bent on stopping high-velocity thrills. The trick is to either outrun the police or catch the speeding dreamer and issue a ticket all that jazz. Not normally mind you. It's a commendable feature, resulting in a brief while.

Billy Whizz

Graphically the game is certainly appealing to the eye, with each car well realised and little in the way of glitching around scenery. The resourceful will notice that the cars display cumulative damage, too. The tracks also maintain a certain cucumber cool, swaying and undulating smoothly with very little scenery pop-up, even in the two-player mode.

The game may look picturesque, but is the gameplay sufficient to satisfy? Ostensibly the answer is yes. The cars handle well, yet there is little discernible difference in individual car handling and some sluggishness when around opposing cars, as if they had that uncanny magnetic ability found only in Marvel comics and warped daydreams. Success, however, is normally a case of acceleration and very occasional use of the brakes. There's a fair complement of options, such as single races, time trials, Hot Pursuit mode and tournaments, which are grand prix in style, and see you purchasing a modest car to race to victory, earning money for superior vehicles and car upgrades whilst unlocking bonus tracks and motahs at the same time. Yet, at the bottom line, the game adds nothing that *Gran Turismo* or *TOCA* have not already integrated into the genre, and they've managed it far more successfully.

FIRST TEN MINUTES

Need For Speed Road Challenge begins disappointingly and, defying the logic of videogames, manages to improve. It takes time to notice the features and graphical touches that salvage this from mediocrity.

COMPETITION

GRAN TURISMO
Mother of All Racing Games, Guardian of The Sacred Gameplay, Member For Realism etc.

97%

RIDGE RACER TYPE 4
The fastest, best looking racer yet. Let down by handling (depending on your POV).

84%

STATION

+ With enough options to differentiate it from the hoi polloi of racing games.

- Racing games are like Pamela Anderson's breasts; great when seen the first time, but soon tiring.

Need For Speed RC holds its head above the water, but gets a soggy chin in the process.

OUT OF 100
78

Rated by Nick White

BIG AIR SNOWBOARDING

PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts **DEVELOPER:** Pitbull Syndicate **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Snowboarding Sim
NO OF PLAYERS: 1–2 **PRICE:** £39.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock

FIRST TEN MINUTES

Fast arcade action is easy to get to grips with, and you soon learn how to pull off increasingly complex stunts.

HAUTE COUTURE

A

COMPETITION

PSYBADEK
Bizarre cutesy racing game on boards or rather 'Deks'.
61%

X-GAMES PRO BOARDER
Nice animation, good graphics and easy to play for the 'boarding novice.
78%

STATION

+ Easy to get to grips with, realistic moves and speed.

− Will only appeal to small core audience, I mean do you know who these 'boarders are?

It won't convert you to the sport, but fans should give it a try.

OUT OF 100
74

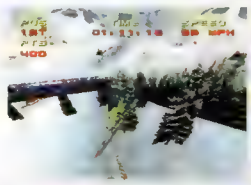
Rated by Kendall Lacey

In my day we only had football games, not these new fangled sports, oh no.

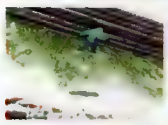
LEFT TO RIGHT: An advanced version of 'I'm a Little Teapot'?; looks it's like time to take up a different sport.

Electronic Arts add another sport to their PlayStation roster with the release of the snowboarding simulator, Big Air. The game features a large number of different playing modes for both single and multiplayer action, including the chance for you to take part in the world tour and travel to events in Canada, Scotland, Germany, America, Japan and Switzerland in an attempt to become world 'boarding numero uno. Should you achieve this feat, then your reward is to take on the International Boardercross Champion, Shaun Palmer.

The only thing you might want to do is turn off the rather naff soundtrack from bands like Snuff and Leatherface, but certainly if snowboarding *is* your thing, then Big Air is worth checking out.

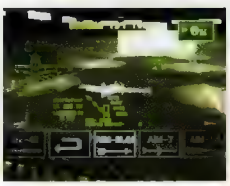
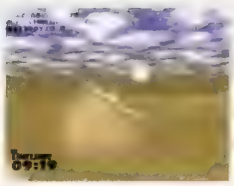
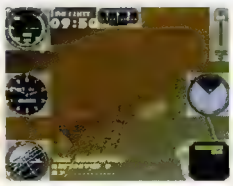


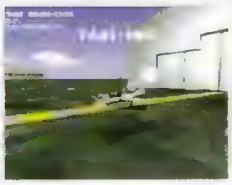
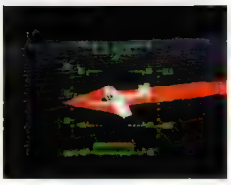
"Re-live the glory and gloat gleefully from a number of cinematic camera angles."



The big air and halfpipe modes allow you to do spectacular tricks and combos and the boardercross mode pits you against 3 other competitors, whilst the race and trick modes find you trying to outperform a single opponent at a time. The variety of tracks also feature different routes to victory which is a nice touch.

Two players can race against each other and the game also includes a replay feature which allows you to re-live the glory and gloat gleefully from a number of cinematic camera angles. The attention to detail is excellent, with the ability to choose your gnarly outfits from eight different companies, as well as selecting the design of the snowboard. The graphics are smooth with nice extra touches, such as snow flying up behind the boarders as they gain speed and flakes falling from the sky, as the game progresses and the six motion captured snowboarders move at a very swift pace.

WING OVER 2

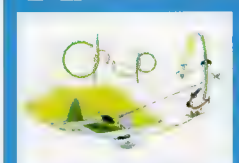
PUBLISHER: JVC **DEVELOPER:** Beluga **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Flight Sim
NO OF PLAYERS: One **PRICE:** £34.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog

It's time to go up-diddly-up-up once more, courtesy of Air JVC.

While the PC is awash with squadrons of highly polished and technically accurate flight sims, the PlayStation is a no-go area for those wishing to emulate Douglas Bader, something to do with PSX players having tiny brains with no span for concentration, presumably. By definition then, Wing Over 2 is an original breath of fresh air, being the closest we'll ever get to the sublime glide-fest *PilotWings* for the foreseeable future.

ABOVE: Tearing down a valley at a suicidally high clip, the replay option comes into its own.

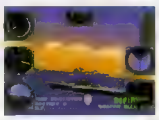
TURN AND BURN

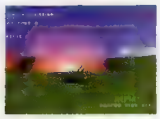


The highly detailed [illegible] Wing Over guidebook is packed full of [illegible] combat manoeuvres such as Immelmann turns, Split-S and Scissors are all there to be learned and then hastily forgotten in the heat of a dogfight.

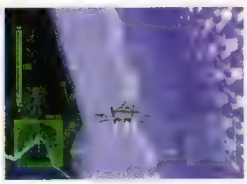
Interestingly, the game is not structured around immediate war, but begins with you attending flight school and running airborne errands to pay for lessons from a gruff Chuck Yeager clone. At the outset you only have the keys for either a slow and gnat-like microlight or a reasonably manoeuvrable trainer jet to undertake the incrementally more serious missions, spanning from dropping off someone's lunch to searching for a downed aircraft. These tasks aren't particularly challenging it has to be said, involving simple A to B jaunts, although the graded practice flights under an instructor's watchful eye prove much more demanding, with strict adherence to the set flight plan being the key to success. Graphically, Wing Over 2 could without doubt have tried much harder, lacking in detail (especially at low levels) but garnering an acceptable impression of speed and distance. In the sonic stakes it's a bit of a shambles too, with a needlessly grating jet engine note looping badly like tinnitus. The front end also is simplistic in that familiarly stilted Japanese style, with text speech that's pointedly different to the voiceover, but oddly these idiosyncrasies add to the overall charm of the game.

"...in the sonic stakes it's a bit of a shambles, with a needlessly grating jet engine note looping badly like tinnitus..."





While lacking so brazenly in most aspects should drive the nails firmly into a game's coffin, it's still an enjoyable, if admittedly not life-changing, way to spend the day.



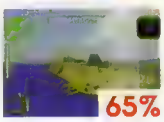
FIRST TEN MINUTES

After wading through the daft introductory screens the game comes as a relief, with idiot-proof controls that mean you have to be something of a moron to crash.

COMPETITION

ACE COMBAT 2
Similar if more combat-obsessed game, soon to be superseded by *Ace Combat 3*.

WARHAWK
Long in the tooth chopper game that's alright but definitely old news.



STATION

+ Flight sims are a rare commodity, fun in an idyllic, 'wheeee!' kind of way.

− Technically a lazybones, dull initial missions, inscrutable front end.

Far too jolly to dislike with any real venom, but still a bit slack for serious sim fans.

OUT OF 100
66

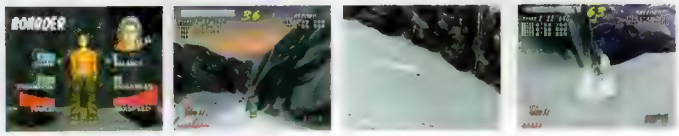
Rated by Christian Slater

PLATINUM

COOL BOARDERS 2

PUBLISHER: Sony **DEVELOPER:** UEP **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Snowboarding Sim
NO OF PLAYERS: 1–2 **PRICE:** £19.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card

Girls in funky threads and guys who look like they're from Pearl Jam, it can only be snowboarding.



FIRST TEN MINUTES

Easy to get into, even though I frequently end up on my backside in the snow. Ouch. Practice, as they say, makes perfect.

STATION

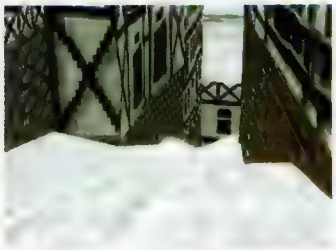
+ Multitude of options and game types augment fast and frantic arcade action.

– Takes a lot of practice to really get into, and visuals are hampered as snow scenarios dictate lack of graphic variety.

Fast, furious and fun snowboarding action, pretty goddamn knarly, er, dude.

OUT OF 100
76

Rated by Kendall Lacey



ABOVE: Chocolate box houses they may be, but for the time being they'll make a good series of obstacles...

Like the proverbial bus, you wait ages for a boarding game and suddenly you are, cough, snowed under. Cool Boarders 2 takes an arcade slant on the sport whilst also giving the dedicated player enough options to get their juices flowing. It features various competition modes, pitting you against opponents or completing solo courses where elaborate stunts earn enough points to advance. Also, it gives you the chance to ignore all the rules and just go to the board park where you have free rein to be as showy or as amateur as you like.

Taking a cue from more traditional racing games, it features a time mode where you race against a ghost of yourself. And if all that isn't enough, you can change the look of your boarder with a range of cool tops and trousers available – then you can customise your trusty board too. Addictive gameplay, good variety and a £19.99 price tag make this a worthy purchase for goatee bearded cool kids everywhere.

PRO 18 WORLD TOUR GOLF

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis **DEVELOPER:** IG **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Golf Sim
NO OF PLAYERS: 1–4 **PRICE:** £34.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card

FIRST TEN MINUTES

I will work out this control method, damn you! Oh hell, second hole and I'm already six over par. Take me to your leaderboard...

STATION

+ Well rendered courses, even for a golf game, and a good selection of real-life golfers.

– Rather po-faced and stern in its demanding interface, this will be too serious for arcade addicts.

What do you wanna know? it's golf. It's good.

OUT OF 100
83

Rated by Kendall Lacey

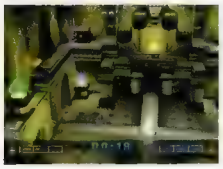
Grab your balls and get down to some fore-play.

Golf games, either your favourite sports genre, or as exciting as watching paint dry. Recently, titles such as *Everybody's Golf* have tried to add new angles and more fun, but for most it is reality and real people that they want, not doe-eyed Japanese girls with big heads.

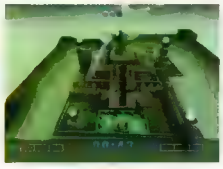
It is these people that Pro 18 is being aimed at, being an authentic simulation of the great game. Graphically lush, it features three real courses rendered excellently and you can read about their place in golf history, should you desire such trivia. The motion captured golfers move smoothly and the learning curve is good, giving you a great feeling of achievement when you get your first birdie after a few holes of frustration. Sound effects add to the ambience and the two commentators, one American and one English, give help as well as the critique of performance.

A smooth and polished title for when you want a break from more active games.

ABOVE: Photo realism has been the calling card of golf games since the Links series appeared on 386 PCs. PlayStation titles have never been better rendered than this.



BLOODLINES



PUBLISHER: Sony **DEVELOPER:** Radical Entertainment **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Arcade beat 'em–up
NO OF PLAYERS: 1–4 **PRICE:** £34.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Multi–tap

ABOVE: One of a profusion of power–ups.

Has a crafty name-change and some time on the back burner weakened this game's genes?

Bloodlines (née *Tribal*) has been knocking about for a while now, seemingly looking for an opening in the release schedules in which its particular stripped-down brand of gameplay wouldn't be submerged by some über-blockbuster. A cross between futuresport and a rudimentary beat 'em-up, the game basically boils down to a version of the playground game *It* that's eaten an entire tub of steroids and is primarily concerned with two or more lean-limbed punk fighters gambolling about some multi-tiered combat arenas. The object is to gain Control (denoted by a healthy glow) by either tackling an opponent to the ground or crossing one of the four or so marker points that are dotted around the landscape when the round begins. The combatants can jump freely and strike hand-to-hand or fire a debilitating glowing ball from their hands (a feature which has the smell of something tacked on at a late stage to re-balance wonky gameplay) while a range of tactical powerups is in plentiful supply and necessary to prevail.

Bloodlines is as a home coin-op, best played against a friend and for no longer than fifteen minutes, so that the thin spots in the gameplay don't become too apparent.

FIRST TEN MINUTES

Once used to the gazelle-like abilities of the fighters it's a reasonably enjoyable ride. Takes a while to load, mind.

STATION

+ Pleasingly competitive and swift, 4–way play is always a jape, well-designed arenas.

– Ultimately may prove repetitive, terrible slow loading times, occasional perspective problems.

Decent enough premise but soon gets stuck in a bit of a rut.

OUT OF 100
70

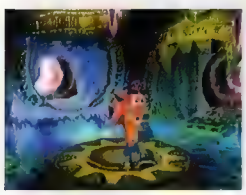
Rated by Christian Slater

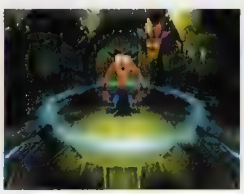
PLATINUM

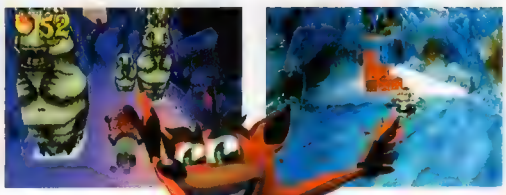
CRASH BANDICOOT 2

PUBLISHER: Sony **DEVELOPER:** Naughty Dog **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** 3D Platformer
NO OF PLAYERS: One **PRICE:** £19.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card

He's cute, he's fast, he likes to chomp apples and he's a bit crazy; it can only be one man, sorry, bandicoot.

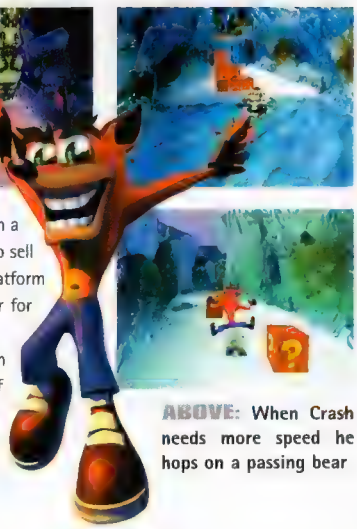






In the same way that a greatest hits album follows a big single, when a game is riding high in the charts then it is the perfect opportunity to sell more product to the kids. With this in mind, everyone's favourite platform hero's second adventure has now been given a Platinum makeover for those who missed it on first release.

Stupidly trusting the obviously evil Dr Neo Cortex, Crash Bandicoot must again collect enough crystals to save the world, and so 3D platform tomfoolery is the order of the day: running, jumping and avoiding anything vaguely nasty. Due to the simplicity of the idea, the game is easy to get into and therefore suitable for the younger player, but later levels provide a challenge for even the most experienced gamester.



ABOVE: When Crash needs more speed he hops on a passing bear

FIRST TEN MINUTES

Blimey, this is fast. Watch me go, watch out for that... damn. Oh well, let's try that again.

STATION

+ Colourful and eye-catching graphics packed with variety and excellent arcade action, remains fresh.

– Cute characters and cartoon appearance will not be to everyone's taste. Occasionally frustrating gameplay.

Classic platform adventure with immense 'one more go' potential. Recommended.

88

Rated by Kendall Lacey

PLATINUM

HEART OF DARKNESS

PUBLISHER: Infogrames **DEVELOPER:** Amazing Studios **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Platformer/Patience Tester
NO OF PLAYERS: One **PRICE:** £19.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Joypad

FIRST TEN MINUTES

The five minute intro sequence is a palette sweetener, designed to relieve the ennui that ensues when the game proper is played. You run, you shoot, you die. That'll be your ten minutes, matey.

STATION

A noble attempt to enliven the platform genre, deflated by a protagonist who rates phenomenally high on the 'twatometer'.

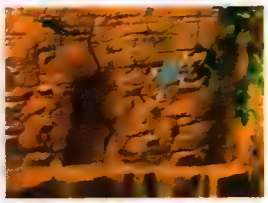
A tragic and perfect case of form over content. The aesthetic of the game is sublime, the gameplay itself seeming almost an afterthought.

Judge not by the eyes, judge by the hand; Heart of Darkness plays like a brick.

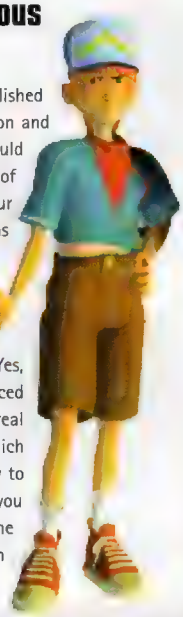
OUT OF 100

55

Rated by Nick White



A game that makes even *Pong* seem virtuous by modern standards.



Four years. Consider the feats that could be accomplished in four years: world peace, colonisation of the moon and the systematic genocide of gameshow hosts. You could also create a 'Next Generation' game such as Heart of Darkness. When it first entered the design stages, four years ago, it was indeed state of the art. Upon its release it was as antiquated and 'with it' as Thora Hird. Not even the copious hype could safeguard this game from mediocrity. Heart of Darkness is like a desperate It Girl, demanding to be liked from an obscure corner in a party; boasting enough features to entice but failing to deliver.

The sole factor that Heart of Darkness relies upon is the graphics. Yes, they are fluid and sleek but nothing that the PlayStation has not produced before, with considerable superiority. The gameplay lacks any real innovation and is abundant with flaws such as sudden, unfair deaths, which madden after the tenth time. The game doesn't even have the dignity to scroll, instead opting to languidly flip between screens, leaving you unprepared for what may come next. You'd be better off reading the profound Conrad novella of the same title: it has infinitely more depth at a tenth of the price.

PLATINUM

FINAL FANTASY VII

PUBLISHER: Sony **DEVELOPER:** Square **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** RPG
NO OF PLAYERS: One **PRICE:** £19.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Joypad

FIRST TEN MINUTES

The introduction alone will reduce you to catatonia; panning and dramatic zooming is unrivalled in cinema. The game may seem slow, but persevere!

STATION

An epic of Hollywood proportions; emotive, captivating and exhilarating. Potentially the best twenty quid you will ever spend.

There is no wrong in this peerless of games, especially at the knockdown price. Honestly, there isn't...

STATION TRIPLE A TITLE

Truly magnificent and cinematic, the Kubrik of the gaming world.

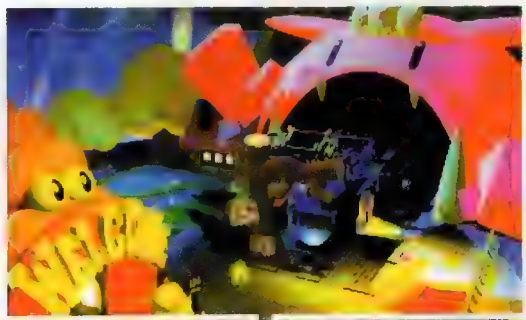
OUT OF 100

94

Rated by Nick White

The best fantasy since Kate Winslett with root vegetables

Final Fantasy VII is, without a doubt, the defining RPG of all time, mooted by some critics to surpass even the impending *Final Fantasy VIII*. The beauty of Final Fantasy VII is that it considers the standard RPG formula and utterly inverts it. There are no doe-eyed schoolgirls and winsome, effete boy-wonders. The world of Final Fantasy VII is one that is being raped of its natural resources by the fascistic Shinra Corporation, invoking Armageddon as a direct result. The moribund land has saviours, however: Cloud, Barret and Tifa amongst others (including my personal favourite, Cait Sith, a cat on a huge golem). Their odyssey is truly fantastic, taking them through stunning pre-rendered locations and battles so immense they threaten to exude from your television. Battle is an easy process, given depth by the Materia (essentially magic power) which offers myriad attacks. And impressive attacks they are, with behemoth hellspawn dominating the screen in cinematic style. Final Fantasy VII is a game for the heart, mind and soul; Jesus Christ for the digital generation.



TRIPLE PLAY 2000

PUBLISHER: EA Sports **DEVELOPER:** In-House **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Sports Sim
NO OF PLAYERS: 1–2 **PRICE:** £39.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card

Everyone's favourite dinosaur Yankee game gets its annual coat of paint.

Like ice hockey, there's not much call for baseball games in these here parts, but EA has spent cash on developing it, so may as well release it over here, the thinking goes. As the umpteenth game based on America's fading national sport this should be sternly competent to say the least, and while Triple Play 2000 shows the trademark Electronic Arts lack of trying particularly hard, it does cover all the bases (natch) statistics-wise. It also proves to be reasonably playable and mildly addictive, more so I'd wager than the accurately dull *Brian Lara Cricket*.

A decent range of pitches and batting approaches can be called upon, again with a definable degree of CPU assistance for the malcoordinated. The stadiums look suitably immense and the players have authentically ugly mugs, which all go towards creating an atmosphere of sorts. Whatever baseball aficionados there are out there will fawn over TP2000, but even non-fans can squeeze some sweet fun juice out of it as well.

RAPT: The requisite neon vapour trails add a few welcome visual bells and whistles to the otherwise serious graphics.

FIRST TEN MINUTES

A wealth of idiot-proof sub-options make the game as hard or simple as your skills dictate.

STATION

+ Comprehensive as a room full of pedants in a particularly picky mood.
− As a sport it somewhat lacks an emotional link with us Limeys.

Reasonably enjoyable, even for the non-baseball fan.

OUT OF 100
77

Rated by Christian Slater

PLATINUM

GRAN TURISMO

PUBLISHER: Sony **DEVELOPER:** Polyphony Digital **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Driving Sim
NO OF PLAYERS: 1–2 **PRICE:** £19.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog

The Most Important Game on the PlayStation? And then some, we reckon...

You'll all know what makes Gran Turismo such a brilliant game, so this space is probably best taken up by listing what's actually not perfect about it (all of which hopefully will be rectified in *GT2*). For starters it would've been prudent to give the licence test a touch more gentle learning curve, just so we wouldn't have had to listen to the whining, unskilled, impatient mainstream gamers that have clogged up our phone lines for the last year, begging for cheats.

The front end should have allowed you to change tracks on Memory Card Battle without having to reload your cars, while the collision physics and computer AI look and feel a bit simplistic now compared to the super-realistic *TOCA 2*. A link cable option was an obvious and annoying omission while a greater variety of tracks would have gone down pretty well in these here parts. Oh, and the lack of visible damage deformations or the inability to flip a car also seems a bit odd nowadays.

Bear in mind though that these criticisms only become noticeable after months of sustained and intensely enjoyable play, and incomplete as it is it's still streets ahead of all but the cream of other driving games.

FIRST TEN MINUTES

Immediately playable in a wondrous, instinctive manner and still number one visually, with only *R4* on a par.

STATION

+ The most accurate and playable driving model ever, coupled with the finest graphics to grace the PSX.
− See below, plus *GT2* will undoubtedly make it redundant.

TRIPLE A TITLE

Arguably the most value per pound seen in a videogame.

OUT OF 100
97

Rated by Christian Slater

IMPORT SECTION

With over 3,500 game titles now available worldwide, we felt it was worth distinguishing between PAL releases and review discs from elsewhere that may never even get an official outing in England. The Import Section is for games that are worthy of mention and available via your friendly importer.

PROJECT K

ALL IMPORT GAMES ARE AVAILABLE FROM PROJECT K.

DETAILS AVAILABLE ON PAGE 98

WHAT'S AROUND THIS MONTH?

[62] - Rockin' Riders

[63] - Kitty The Kool, Final Fantasy Collection, Last Blade

[64] - Chocobo Racing, Legend Of Legaia

[65] - Microman, Septentrion, Lightning Slash

[66] - Nectaris, FreeStyle Boarding

[67] - Pepsiman, Air Race Championship

WHAT DOES IT MEAN...?

LANGUAGE BARRIER: How easy is it to understand? 100% means it is crystal clear and even your crazy old aunt would understand it; 0% indicates is clear as mud and will make as much sense to the English player as the continuing success of *Blind Date*.

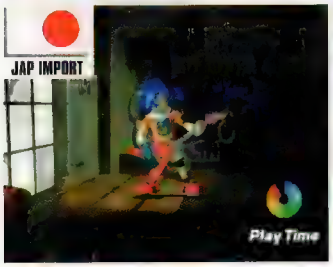
INTERNET: Any sites that feature information or help on this particular game are listed here. Saves you from searching for 'Lightning Slash' and coming up with something extremely pornographic.

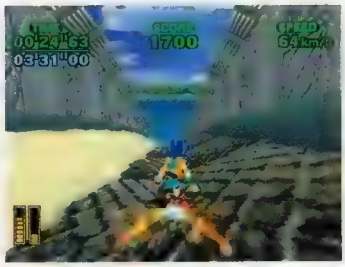
ALTERNATIVES: Other similar titles available in good ole Blighty which bear some resemblance to these foreign curiosities, except, er, they're in English.

ROCKIN' RIDERS

PUBLISHER: Import **DEVELOPER:** Pixx Corp.
RELEASE DATE: Out now
GAME TYPE: Rythm Action/Sports Sim
NO OF PLAYERS: One
COMPATIBILITY: Memory Card

Guitars and snow rarely mix, at least not unless you're an Innuit metaller or Japanese game designer.





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Let's Rock! Massive powerchords, Pete Townshend syle jumps and stage diving are a button press away; striking sparks off the metal as you slide, the impression of speed is adequate; it's not an advert looking for a new guitarist anyway...; reach for the sky, and if you're unlucky, you might just hit it.

LANGUAGE BARRIER: 60%
You can play it, but the objectives remain unclear. The voices are all in English, strangely enough.
PAL CONVERSION: 20%
Highly unlikely to hit these shores in its current state.
INTERNET: Nope.

STATION

Lame if likeable, this is a stoopid game that really isn't worth possessing.

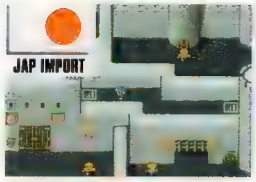
OUT OF 100

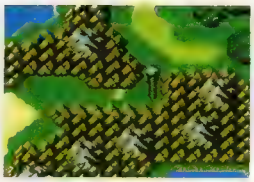
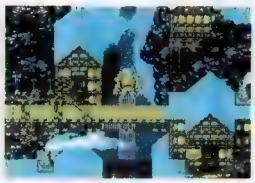
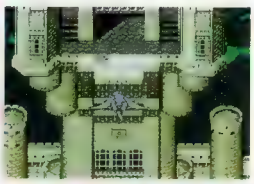
62

Rated by Christian Slater

Eclecticism is only sometimes A Good Thing in computer games, as all too often titles which try and shoe-horn two or more disparate genres into one package spread themselves a bit thin (*Spawn* and *Psybadek* for example). Rockin Riders ignores this wisdom in a particularly cavalier manner and slaps together cutesy snowboarding with rawkin' rhythm action to create a distinctive, if rather bizarre, mix. After selecting an animé-niac cartoon criminal you can then either enter the music room and jam or take to the slopes. The former section basically turns your joypad into a sample trigger device, with individual snatches of guitar lick, vocals or drum solo ready to activate and string together into interesting improvised cacophonies until the time limit runs out. There doesn't appear to be a score as such, so we're assuming it acts as some kind of reward for doing well in the snowboarding aspect. This seems to involve racing a bunch of other punk riders who when overtaken donate to you a musical instrument, adding extra channels to the background tune. It's no *Cool Boarders*, believe you me, and won't provide too many thrills for the seasoned snow pro. Best to play about with a mate's copy I'd say, and briefly at that. 6

ALTERNATIVES: Cool Boarders 2 for the snowboarding section, PaRappa the Rappa for the 'Simon Says' ditty. Combined price would be cheaper than this little chestnut.



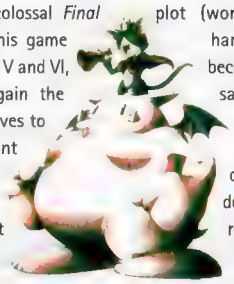




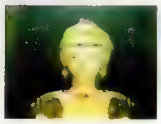
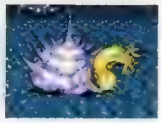
FINAL FANTASY COLLECTION

PUBLISHER: Square **DEVELOPER:** In-House
RELEASE DATE: Out now **GAME TYPE:** RPG
NO OF PLAYERS: One
COMPATIBILITY: Memory Card

Take out your shell-suits and pretend it's 1989 again, a time when games were crap...

Confucius spoke about heritage, how one must never forget one's roots. He forgot the fact that we must also evolve and transcend our roots, not experience them again and again, ad nauseam. Square believe that Confucius was correct and that we must endure the antecedent games to the colossal *Final Fantasy VII*. The roots of this game are found in Final Fantasy IV, V and VI, all on this compilation. Again the past is dredged up and it serves to allow us to enjoy the present via the ineptitude of the past. The three games themselves are almost indistinguishable, all running on ostensibly the same game engine, sharing virtually the same plot (world in jeopardy, small boy harnesses arcane powers to become messiah etc.) with the same combat routines. The games do have an endearing appeal, yet the twee dialogue and lack of character depth will soon make the brain revolt. If you missed these titles initially, be thankful. This is only for the hardcore RPG fanatic and fans of Judith Chalmers.



LANGUAGE BARRIER: 20%
PAL CONVERSION: Unlikely methinks.
INTERNET: http://www.rpgamer.com

STATION — Nostalgia alone cannot salvage this rudimentary attempt to exhume the past. — OUT OF 100 — 55

Rated by Nick White

ALTERNATIVES: Well, the first games that spring to mind are obviously FFVII and FFVIII. Failing that, buy a Game Boy if you really want this style.

LAST BLADE

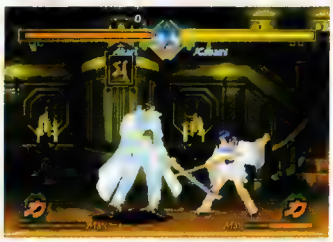
PUBLISHER: SNK **DEVELOPER:** In-House
RELEASE DATE: Out now
GAME TYPE: Beat 'em-up
NO OF PLAYERS: 1-2
COMPATIBILITY: Memory Card

Come out from your dojo, it is time to kick some ass, again.

ABOVE: Hey! Is that any way to treat a lady, young man? Shame on you...

The fighting game genre headed firmly into the next millennium with the release of titles such as *Tekken 3* and *Soul Blade*, games which placed you in the heart of the action. Before the revolution, we made do with 2D scrapping and limited move sequences. The king of this world was of course *Street Fighter*, a game that has spawned more sequels than Liz Taylor has had husbands. Now it is the turn of Last Blade to give you the chance to relive the good ole days and bask in nostalgia – choose from classic warriors such as the big tall handsome hero, or the feisty little schoolgirl. A power bar at the bottom of the screen decides how effective your attacks are going to be and with enough power behind you, the reward will be a spurt of blood from your injured opponent.

Good fun for a while, but monotony soon sets in and you find yourself craving something a little more nineties.



ALTERNATIVES: Stick to Bushido Blade or Soul Blade, or perhaps try the sublime Tenchu for a little added suspense. Failing that there's many SF collections.

LANGUAGE BARRIER: 90% – No problemo!
PAL CONVERSION: 0%
INTERNET: N/A.

STATION — Mildly diverting for a while but poses no threat to the mighty *Tekken* trilogy. — OUT OF 100 — 62

Rated by Kendall Lacey

KITTY THE KOOL

PUBLISHER: Imagineer
DEVELOPER: Sawni Smiles
RELEASE DATE: Out now
GAME TYPE: Rythm Action/Cute Nausea
NO OF PLAYERS: 1-2
COMPATIBILITY: Memory Card

Hello Kitty; A Japanese phenomenon that we all want to slaughter.

Hello Kitty is a basic marketing concept: a grotesque caricature cat with extended, cute features, pasted onto a range of consumables. The Japanese thrive on characters such as this, rushing out en masse to purchase merchandise like Hello Kitty toys, comics and bog roll. Needless to say, their love of games meant that Kitty and microchip entertainment would eventually converge. The premise, as far as I could discern, is to hit buttons as a small hand moves over a yellow line at an accelerating speed, and various buttons have to be pressed as it reaches the 'impact zone'. Unlike *PaRappa*, however, there seems to be no indication of which button to press when, leaving the British player to wallow in confusion and slowly grow to loathe the odious feline protagonist and her kin.

ALTERNATIVES: Sensible UK gamers would be advised to purchase PaRappa, or the impending sequel Um Jammer Lammy.

LANGUAGE BARRIER: 60% There is precious little English, yet the game is a simple enough concept to grasp.
PAL CONVERSION: No plans as yet.
INTERNET: http://www.groovygames.com/kitty

STATION — Simplistic and frustrating; the gaming equivalent of *Blind Date*: the runt of the cat-litter. — OUT OF 100 — 55

Rated by Nick White

CHOCOBO RACING

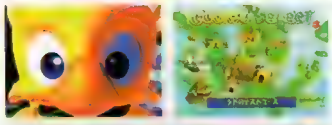
PUBLISHER: Squaresoft **DEVELOPER:** In-House
RELEASE DATE: Out now **GAME TYPE:** Racing
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-2
COMPATIBILITY: Memory Card

Race a giant chicken, dive like a duck.

For some, the best thing about the *Final Fantasy* series is the variety of characters; for others it is the challenges that you must face. For me the greatest aspect is the chocobos, funny super deformed chickens who scream 'CUTE!' from every feather. Here our clucking friends take centre stage as they race against a number of bizarre competitors. A variety of power-ups can naturally be acquired to help you speed to victory.

Modes include a one player story game, grand prix, timed laps and head to head action. Venues range from normal race tracks to those made of sweets and gateaux, upping the sickly sweet ante. Animation is smooth and there are no discernible language problems. A fast, addictive racing treat. S

ALTERNATIVES: There are several PAL choices including Bomberman Fantasy Race from Virgin and Street Racer from Ubi Soft.



LANGUAGE BARRIER: 75%
(Only a problem in story mode)
PAL CONVERSION: No.
INTERNET: www.thaaron.com/chocobo.html

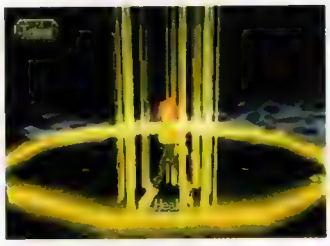
Rated by Kendall Lacey

STATION — The novelty racer is very much in fashion at the moment, and the don't come more novel than this. — OUT OF 100 — 84

LEGEND OF LEGAIA

PUBLISHER: Sony **DEVELOPER:** SCEA
RELEASE DATE: Out now **GAME TYPE:** RPG
NO. OF PLAYERS: One
COMPATIBILITY: Memory Card

Pull the bedroom curtains closed, shun the outside world and don the pointy hat. It's RPG time again...



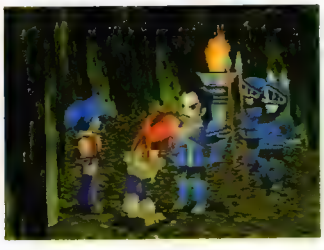
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Small girl fights Golem shocker. Surely the rock would shatter her bones?; unleashing magic attacks can lead to some tasty pyrotechnic effects; talk to the delinquent village folk and wonder at their inbred ways.

Darwin was a visionary of genius proportions with his theory of Natural Selection; summarised as 'only the strongest will survive'. The PlayStation games field is akin to a wilderness, with the predatory beasts of the scene prowling the range, making fodder of the lesser titles. The best titles will devour the lesser and this is always the way. Legend of Legaia is predestined to be overshadowed by the impending *Final Fantasy VIII*, so what can it offer by way of defence? The plot is standard RPG fayre; world under threat, small boy saves world utilising unknown magical powers etc. It becomes strangely compelling as you progress through, partly as you know roughly what to expect and are eager to see exactly how it will be handled and if it meets your expectations.

Easy, Tiger

One factor that makes the game a joy, when it could have so easily been a torment, is the ease of play. The interface is intuitive at all times, especially during battles, an activity that takes up much of your time throughout. Combat gives you the freedom to use combo-attacks and special moves, *Tekken* style, that can be strengthened by absorbing powers from vanquished foes. The pugilism is turn based, giving you enough time to plan an attack and implement it without any of the frantic decision making found in the real-time combat of *Final Fantasy VII*. Graphically the game is fairly simplistic, with rough polygon characters and sketchy cut scenes. That being said, the effects of the magic in battles can be stunning. Sadly, comparison is inevitable in the reviews business and Legend of Legaia lacks the vigour of the *Final Fantasy* games, in plot, depth, visuals and immersion. If you simply must play an RPG, then this is well advised. Smart money, however, is placed on the golden child of *Final Fantasy VIII* in the Autumn. S

ALTERNATIVES: The list is endless, Wild Arms, Granstream Saga, but the best plan would be to stick the Final Fantasy series, it has to be said.



LANGUAGE BARRIER: 90%
PAL CONVERSION: 75% – Probable.
INTERNET: http://www.rpgamer.com

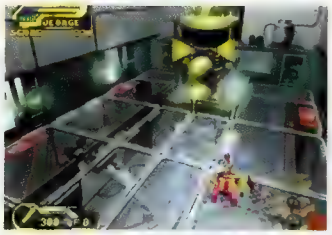
Rated by Nick White

STATION — Psychedelic and bizarre, a contrast to the more 'serious' and violent games — OUT OF 100 — 84

MICROMAN

PUBLISHER: Takara Co. **DEVELOPER:** In-House
RELEASE DATE: Out now
GAME TYPE: Shoot 'em- up
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-2
COMPATIBILITY: Memory Card

He is a man, he is micro, he has come to save the world, possibly...



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: A tiny man fights much bigger nasty looking robots and survives - how?; blast everything in your sights and protect that generator before she blows; this group of fine upstanding citizens is Microman and his cyber buddies.

The Japanese have a number of strange passions. One is superheroes, another is shrinking everything to its smallest possible size and one is anything retro. Thus, it was only a matter of time before some bright spark merged all three of these joys into one convenient package. Enter Microman, our hero who looks like a super-deformed Power Ranger, and whose job it is to guard a high tech environment against bigger and tougher robots. He is aided by grenades, blasters and other similar weapons, but they basically all do the same job and that is to blow things up, over and over again, and therein lies the flaw. No level has any variety, one screen merges into the next with bland graphics and absolutely no shift in gameplay. The look of the game appears inspired by '80s arcade shooters such as *Quartet*, but it ignores the variety of such titles. Unless you really covet a game which seems to represent the Go-bots on acid, stay away from Microman and look for something a little... bigger. S

ALTERNATIVES: Anything that could have inspired this bizarre piece of work would have been found in the arcades long before our grey box was even born.

LANGUAGE BARRIER: 85% - Just shoot stuff.
PAL CONVERSION: No.
INTERNET: N/A

STATION: Fun for a few minutes but nothing to keep the attention.

OUT OF 100: 48

Rated by Kendall Lacey

LIGHTNING SLASH

PUBLISHER: Takara **DEVELOPER:** In-House
RELEASE DATE: Out now
GAME TYPE: Combat
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-2
COMPATIBILITY: Memory Card

Man and machine combine in the purest of primal activities - beating each other to a bloody morass of flesh and steel.

The basic idea of Lightning Slash is a very simple one, it involves huge robots patrolling around, blowing the hell out of each other. This can be done in one of two ways; either by locking on to your enemy and blasting them to kingdom come, or by picking them up and smashing their metallic heads into the ground.

There are various arenas in which to do battle, ranging from dodging in between burning buildings, to wandering around completely barren landscapes with absolutely nowhere to hide. The simplicity makes it a good game to pick up and play but go a little deeper and there are many options to be found. You are able to choose the time of day that the battles take place as well as the weather conditions in which you fight.

A number of different game modes exist, allowing you the option of: conflict in the destination of your choice; a timed challenge; or head-to-head. Normal mode seems to include a story which Western audiences will not understand, but there is enough fun to be had causing wilful destruction to not have to worry about such things. S

ALTERNATIVES: Mechwarrior - more big kick ass robots shooting stuff.

LANGUAGE BARRIER: 85% - No problem during the battles but you miss out on the story.
PAL CONVERSION: No.
INTERNET: N/A

STATION: Psychedelic and bizarre, a contrast to the more 'serious' and violent games around at present.

OUT OF 100: 81

Rated by Kendall Lacey

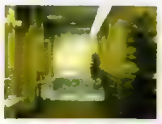
SEPTENTRION

PUBLISHER: Human **DEVELOPER:** In-House
RELEASE DATE: Out now
GAME TYPE: Underwater Adventure
NO. OF PLAYERS: One
COMPATIBILITY: Memory Card

3D Action with a watery slant - different...

After *Titanic*, it was inevitable that a game would arrive with a similar slant. This curious Japanese adventure opts for *Resident Evil* type gameplay but there is no lovely Kate Winslett, alas. The opening movie is stunning, showing the ship starting its voyage before disaster strikes and people start tasting too much saltwater. There follows a long cutscene and this is where it falls apart for the English player as the mission instructions are essential to proceed through even the early stages of the game. I'm sure there's an interesting game here trying to get out, but without a translator it must be assigned to Davy Jones' locker. Glug, glug and if you will, glug. S

ALTERNATIVES: If you're looking for this type of game, then Capcom's Resident Evil (Platinum - £19.99) and Resident Evil 2 are must buys.



LANGUAGE BARRIER: 20%
PAL CONVERSION: No.
INTERNET: None found.

STATION: There may be hidden potential, but only if you speak the lingo I'm afraid.

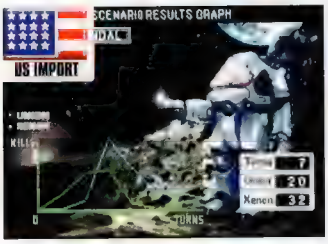
OUT OF 100: 40

Rated by Kendall Lacey

NECTARIS

PUBLISHER: Hudson **DEVELOPER:** Jaleco
RELEASE DATE: Out now
GAME TYPE: Strategy
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1–2
COMPATIBILITY: Memory Card

All-out war isn't just for eastern Europeans, y'know. Apply here.



While *Warzone 2100* pushes the decidedly lo-fi *Command & Conquer* strategy game template into three dimensions, this resolutely cheap and cheerful clone sticks to widgy and flat sprites to represent the battlefield of the future. The scenario is unimportant, obviously, being just an excuse for a load of tanks and mechanical infantrymen to have a ruck on a barren landscape, while the combat itself does seem to be reasonably in-depth, balancing the usual firepower stats with smart factors like supporting fire, encirclement and terrain. Skirmishes are depicted in a surprisingly watchable full 3D replay, with meaty explosions and tracer fire that almost makes up for the workman-like look of the rest of the game. It's all reasonably likeable, but certainly not the kind of thing worth paying over the odds for as a crafty import unless you're an absolute strategy freak. 5

ALTERNATIVES: Virgin's Command & Conquer is an old favourite, but Eidos' new Warzone 2100 looks like the one to get.

LANGUAGE BARRIER: 100% – It's all in the Queen's English, don'tcha know.
PAL CONVERSION: None at present.
INTERNET: N/A.

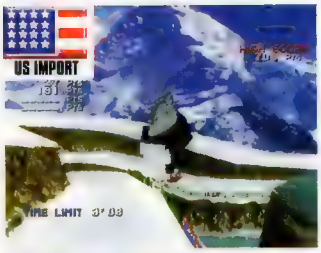
Rated by Christian Slater

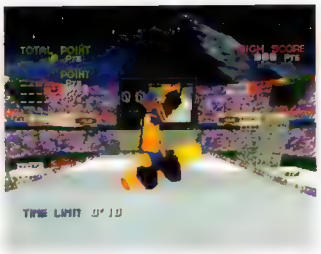
STATION

More combat in the model of *C&C*, frankly now a bit past it.

OUT OF 100

67





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Seconds later Johan's stomach contents violently erupted from both orifices; replay those noble moments of ostentation or crippling defeat; a leap for victory, but with the unenviable null points I wouldn't celebrate.

FREESTYLE BOARDIN' 99

PUBLISHER: Virgin **DEVELOPER:** Capcom
RELEASE DATE: Out now **GAME TYPE:** Snowboarding/cash in
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-2
COMPATIBILITY: Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog

More powder than a weekend with the Gallagher brothers.

Summer is upon us; time for frivolity and copious making of merry as the temperature soars into what is, for Britain, the tropical.

Just about time for some winter sports, then, to remind us that winter inevitably comes and that all of life is indeed a transient and passing phenomenon. The PlayStation has a glut of snowboarding titles, resulting in the grim reality that Freestyle Boardin' 99 may have to be the paragon of the genre to gain any recognition. Sadly, it sucks Satan's scaly pecker and remains derivative and uninspired, a mere doppelgänger of all that has transpired in previous 'boarding titles.

Board And Piste Off

As is customary, there are numerous options to choose from; such as the two player battle, freestyle and tournament modes, but visually, the game is mediocre at best with jagged 'boarders and cardboard scenery.

The actual handling of the 'boarders is surprisingly tight, allowing for some dramatic hairpin turns, and the array of tricks is easy to execute, momentarily distracting the attention from the infuriating guitar-rock and American commentator the game vomits forth at you. Leon, from *Resident Evil 2*, makes a cameo appearance as a hidden 'boarder; sadly not enough to salvage this trite game from the lowest circle of hell. 5

ALTERNATIVES: UK gamers would be better off with any of the Cool Boarders titles, the original innovators on the PlayStation.

ABOVE: In the end of the day it all feels like we've been here before.

LANGUAGE BARRIER: 100% (All American text and language)
PAL CONVERSION: TBC
INTERNET: http://www.capcom.com

Rated by Nick White

STATION

A toxic fart of a game that should be shuffled away from with some haste.

OUT OF 100

55

PEPSI MAN

PUBLISHER: Pepsi
RELEASE DATE: Out now **GAME TYPE:** Racer
NO. OF PLAYERS: One
COMPATIBILITY: Memory Card

Running platform action with a theme designed to make you thirsty for more.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: When traversing the city streets one should be especially careful of any over-sized cans of carbonated beverage; here everyone is too busy enjoying the thrill of product placement to worry about the guy in the suit.

The PlayStation platformer has featured many varied and colourful lead characters, but maybe never one as strange as in this bizarre adventure. Your mission, should you wish to accept it, is to run around the city until you reach your goal, the nearest vending machine. The hero is known simply as Pepsi Man, a fellow who doesn't need superpowers, all he requires is his favourite brand of beverage to keep on going. Just in case you forget the theme, obstacles throughout the game include Pepsi boxes and Pepsi trucks and the lead character is dressed in a Pepsi suit, hardly the fashion statement of the decade, merely another example of the advertising overshadowing the shallow gameplay.

An Indiana Jones inspired level features our hero being chased by, not a huge boulder, but by a huge Pepsi. Instead of a life meter, there is a Pepsi logo and instead of collecting coins, you pick up Pepsi cans. As you can imagine overkill quickly sets in and you find yourself hungry for unbranded gameplay.

At times the omnipotence of the fluid becomes far too much, even offensive, as in the scenes where homeless people hold up signs saying 'Give Me Pepsi' as if all the world needs to be happy is a glass of fizzy brown liquid.

Gameplay is simplistic and monotonous with much more time given to product placement than to keeping the player's interest. I find myself regularly asking whether I am supposed to enjoy this game or take a trip to the local supermarket. I would suggest that you do neither. Drink water and play something more interesting than this insipid attempt to brainwash the player into becoming a consumer.

ALTERNATIVES: Running Wild – Strange amalgam of Wildlife On One and a normal racing game, although there is no sugary liquid included, alas.

LANGUAGE BARRIER: 95% – Just run, okay?
PAL CONVERSION: No.
INTERNET: http://www.pepsiman.com

STATION

Too much of a commercial, repetitive, samey and simplistic.

OUT OF 100

52

Rated by Kendall Lacey

AIR RACE CHAMPIONSHIP

PUBLISHER: Metro
DEVELOPER: Xing Entertainment
RELEASE DATE: TBC
GAME TYPE: Flight/ Racing
NO OF PLAYERS: 1–2
COMPATIBILITY: Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog

A new ultra absorbent racing game, with wings.

ABOVE: The air that you breath just became the Wembley of the skies.

Imagine the scene in a Japanese boardroom; frustrated executives mentally straining to conjure up a unique inspiration for their racing game. One executive rises and utters 'A racing game with planes'. A noble idea as a hypothesis, a hideous concept when programmed like Air Race Championship. Yes, you race in twee planes but there the path of novelty ends abruptly. The usual modes are on offer such as Time Trial, Two Player and Grand Prix mode, offering cash prizes for high placings and allowing you to upgrade your plane to a more advanced model. Racing itself occurs on a limited number of tracks and is an experience verging upon the agonising. The racing dynamics are sluggish and the flat scenery resembles a shaky prop from *Prisoner Cell Block H*, looking as attractive as most of the inmates.

ALTERNATIVES: A good choice would be Wing Over 2, although not a racer per se, it's far more involving and unintentionally amusing via dubious translations.

LANGUAGE BARRIER: 80% – Only the technical information about the planes is in Japanese. It ensues for easy play, alienating only obsessive aviation fiends.
PAL CONVERSION: Not as far as we know.
INTERNET: Just fly the damn thing, bub.

STATION

Games like this make repeated colonic irrigation seem a pleasing pastime.

OUT OF 100

45

Rated by Nick Wakie

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Helpline: 0891 303330

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Internet: www.activision.com

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CAPCOM
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CODEMASTERS
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Internet: www.core-design.com

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Internet: www.ctw.co.uk

DATEL ELECTRONICS
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DMA DESIGN
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ELECTRONIC ARTS
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EIDOS
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FIRE INTERNATIONAL
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Internet: N/A

GAMESTER/LMP
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Internet: N/A

GREMLIN
Tel: 0114 263 9900
Internet: www.gremlin.co.uk

GROLIER
Tel: 01865 264 800
Internet: www.grolier.co.uk

GT INTERACTIVE
Tel: 0171 486 5099
Internet: www.gtinteractive.com
Helpline: 0171 565 7303

IGUANA ENT.
Tel: 01642 614 000
Internet: www.acclaimnation.com

INTERPLAY
Tel: 01628 423 666
Internet: www.interplay.com
Helpline: 01628 423 723

JVC
Tel: 0171 240 3121
Internet: www.jvc-europe.com

KONAMI
Tel: 01895 853 000
Internet: www.konami.com
www.konami.co.jp

LOGIC 3
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Internet: N/A

LUCASARTS
No UK offices
Internet: www.lucasgames.com

MAXIS
Tel: 0171 505 1500
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MIDWAY
No UK offices
Internet: www.midway.com

MINDSCAPE
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Internet: N/A

NAMCO
Tel: 0171 734 7737
Internet: www.namco.com
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NAUGHTY DOG
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OCEAN/INFOGRAMES
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Internet: www.infogrames.co.uk

PROBE
Tel: 0181 680 4142
Internet: www.probe.co.uk

PSYGNOSIS
Tel: 0151 282 3000
Internet: www.psygnosis.com

SCi
Tel: 0171 585 3308
Internet: www.sci.co.uk

SHINY
No UK offices
Internet: www.shiny.com

SONY COMPUTER ENT.
Tel: 0171 911 8700
Internet: www.playstation.co.uk
Helpline: 0881 505 505

SQUARESOFT
No UK offices
Internet: www.squaresoft.com (USA)
www.square.co.jp (Japan)

TAKE 2 INT.
Tel: 0171 3847500
Internet: www.take2games.com

TELSTAR
Tel: 01932 22223
Internet: www.telstar.co.uk/tes/index.htm

THQ
Tel: 01483 767 656
Internet: www.thq.com

TITUS
Tel: 0171 700 2119
Internet: www.titusgames.com

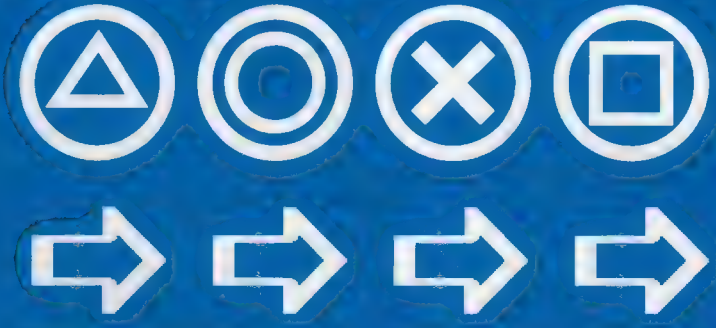
UBI SOFT
Tel: 0181 944 9000
Internet: www.ubisoft.com

VIRGIN
Tel: 0171 368 2255
Internet: www.vie.co.uk

Try to make your calls to companies pertinent and only call with problems after you have read the manual throughly. If you've exhausted your options and explored every avenue, then you've every right to call the company about your software. After all, if you'd bought anything else off a company and you had a question, they'd be happy to help!

THE eDGE

This month's eDGE now contains codes for both of the two major cheat cartridges on the market, as well as all of the usual passwords, hints and tips for a range of top games. As if all that isn't enough, we've also included three mini guides, a complete walkthrough for the latest Gex adventure and a breakdown of R-Type Delta. Massively comprehensive, there's now no excuse not to finish your favourite games.



BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY

CHEATS

- Big Air
- Rugrats
- Running Wild
- T'ai Fu
- Triple Play 2000
- Abe's Exoddus
- Wild Arms
- X-Games Pro Boarder
- C&C: Retaliation
- Syphon Filter
- Darkstalkers 3
- Gex: Deep Cover Gecko
- R-Types
- Bust-A-Move 4
- Rollcage
- Need For Speed RC

MINI GUIDES

- Gran Turismo
- Cool Boarders 2
- A Bug's Life

XPLORER & DATEL CODES

Over 500 codes for the Blaze & Datel Cartridges

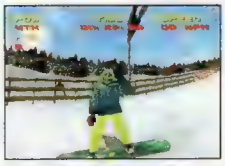
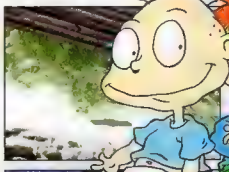
SOLUTIONS

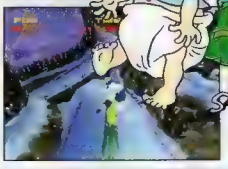
- Gex: Deep Cover Gecko
- R-Type Delta

BIG AIR

ALL LEVEL AND PLAYERS

Go to the screen where you select what music track you want to listen to, then put it on Blink 182, [dammit] and play it. Next put it on Blink 182, [untitled] and exit. When you leave, the game should start playing Blink 182, [untitled]. Go to the Character Selection screen and hold ⦿ + △ + ⦿ + ⊗. The words 'Blink 182 Rocks' will confirm the code.



RUGRATS: SEARCH FOR REPTAR

EASIER PUTT IN MINI-GOLF

While putting on the mini-golf course, hold down the walk button and the aiming line will move a lot slower, making it easier to aim. It's not much, but it does help.

JUMPING DOWN THE STAIRS

While you are in the house, get to the top of the stairs and make sure you're facing down the stairs. Now you should be able to jump the whole staircase and it wont even hurt Tommy. Not much of a code, but it's fun and saves a bit of time.

PLAY ON PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

Go to the game Grandpa's Teeth 'Medium'. If you press ⦿ next to the playground equipment you will see a small movie of the Rugrats playing on the equipment.

PLAY WITH SPIKE

You can play fetch with Spike outdoors by picking up the small ball, the bone, and the stick.

SECRET REPTAR BARS

Go to the basement and look on the right side of the computer.

When playing hole eight on Ice Cream Mountain, go around to the other side of the pyramid. Go into the entrance way and explore all of the pyramid. You will find a lot of Reptar Bars and also you will find Mr Friend's mummy.

Go into the back yard and look behind Spike's dog house.

Go into Stu's and Didi's room and walk into the closet. Then look on the left side.

Look behind the couch in the family room upstairs. Go behind the crib in Tommy's room.

Look behind the trash can in the kitchen.

GRAN TURISMO - MINI GUIDE

101 A LINE

One of the essential factors in the art of racing clean fashion is the racing line around the tracks which should be stuck to like an experimental glue. Lose it for as little as one corner and the race is lost, leaving only bitter tears and the foul taste of melancholy. Religiously use the rear view mirror, better yet is to stick with the external car view, the more protracted the view the more comprehensive your view of the racing line. Equally important is to keep a steady eye on the other racers. They are persistent, thinking little of shunting you out of the way, placing them high on your shitlist. Pretending they're dead won't help either, so make sure your assess their relative positions before you commit to particularly boisterous corners. As Miyagi may have said to Daniel-san, blocking is crucial. Play dirty and be an obstacle to other cars in the corner areas. The computer cars always take corners near the inside, as you know exactly where to hinder them. They won't mind.

SLIDE

Corners used to be those painfully visible punishment areas for naughty schoolchildren. Now they are the martyrdom of racing game players. When sliding into a corner, make sure that your back wheels don't touch the gravel/grass. For that way lies danger, not to mention getting mud all over the freshly buffed bodywork. The safest and easiest way to tackle especially sharp corners is to accelerate first, reducing the throttle and brake later into the corner if required. As the cars vary in individual handling, the method for taking corners is specific to the model. There are universal rules, however, such as 'tapping' the brake several times as opposed to simply slamming it down on one, causing an almost inevitable skid. Equally effective is to accelerate out of the bend, keeping a right foot as you drift away.

ARCADE MODE

To access all the tracks on Arcade mode, you must win on each of the already available tracks, on all three classes of car. Complete the game on easy and you'll receive five new manufacturers and four new tracks. Complete the game on normal to witness the ending sequence. Complete this game on hard to unlock the GT Hi-Fi mode; a time attack on three night tracks with a staggering running speed.

GRAB AN INTERNATIONAL A CLASS LICENCE

TEST ONE: SPEED RING TIME TRIAL
CAR: TVR GRIFFITH
REQUIREMENTS: FINISH IN UNDER 1 MINUTE 7 SECS

The given car has a good level of grip and makes the tight corners easy to cope with. Keep to the racing line and brake only enough to regain control, try a slingshot of power back out into the straights.

TEST TWO: SS ROUTE 5 TIME TRIAL
CAR: DODGE VIPER
REQUIREMENTS: FINISH IN UNDER 1 MIN 30 SECS

A tricky track, but the main hindrance is the car itself. There is virtually no traction, so if you make into a bend, you have to steer out of it almost immediately to prevent spinning out.

TEST THREE: GRAND VALLEY TIME TRIAL
CAR: TVR GRIFFITH
REQUIREMENTS: FINISH IN UNDER 2 MINS 3 SECS

Another car with slack handling makes this rather torturous. Spinning out is easy here, so be sure to slow down in plenty of time. Watch out for the chicane-like bends.

TEST FOUR: DEEP FOREST TIME TRIAL
CAR: DODGE VIPER
REQUIREMENTS: FINISH IN UNDER 1 MIN 23 SECS

Brake early for all the bends here, as the given car is rather inept at cornering and handling. You almost have to glide round the bends, so take it easy with the pedals.

TEST FIVE: AUTUMN RING TIME TRIAL
CAR: DODGE VIPER
REQUIREMENTS: UNDER 1 MIN 24 SECS

The hairpin bends here are a bonanza. You can either take the bends slowly and carefully or use the handbrake. Either works well.

TEST SIX: TRIAL MOUNTAIN
CAR: DODGE VIPER
REQUIREMENTS: UNDER 1 MIN 33 SECS

Only a few really sharp bends and areas where you can spin off. Remember to steer away from the kerbs or good time as this car lacks traction.

TEST SEVEN: SS ROUTE 11 TIME TRIAL
CAR: TVR GRIFFITH
REQUIREMENTS: 1 MIN 50 SECS

This track changes direction several times, leaving you headed straight for a wall. Keep the speed reasonable and success will be yours.

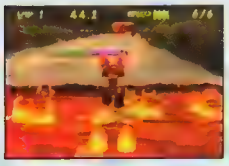
TEST EIGHT: GRAND VALLEY 2 TIME TRIAL
CAR: DODGE VIPER
REQUIREMENTS: 1 MIN 50 SECS

The final round. Apply all the lessons learned prior and the elusive license will be on your space. Do that thing.

RUNNING WILD

ALTERNATIVE UNIFORMS
To change your uniform colour press L1 or R1 when choosing a character.

SHORTCUT IN JUNGLE
Jump through penultimate waterfall in the Jungle and you will be at the finish line.



SHORTCUT IN LAVA LEVEL
In the lava level soon after the finish line, there is a hole all the way to your right, after you jump over all of those lava pits. Run onto the last booster before the hole in the wall and jump into it. This hole cuts across part of the level.

SHORTCUT ON MOON
The shortcut is directly after the split tunnel starts on your left. Run to your right, then jump at the wall on your left after you pass the ramp.

T'AI FU: WRATH OF THE TIGER

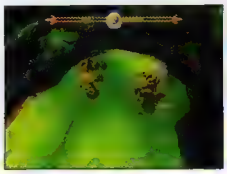
MAP SCREEN CHEATS
This code must be enabled before any of the other codes at the map screen can be activated. At the map screen, press R2, △, R2, △, ○, ↓, □.

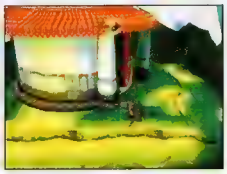
LEVEL SELECT
Enable the 'Map screen cheat mode' code. Then at the map screen, press R2, △, R2, △, ○, □, ↓, △, ↑, →, ←, ↓, ↑, L2.

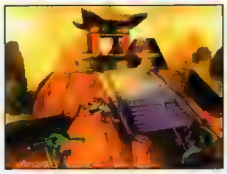
LONGER FLIGHTS
After learning the crane style, you can fly really far by rapidly pressing the JUMP button. This will carry you further than simply holding the button down.

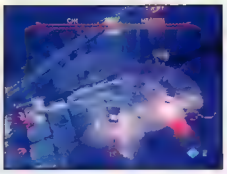
STORY/STYLE SELECT
Enable the 'Map screen cheat mode' code. Then at the map screen, press R2, △, R2, △, □, ○, ↓, △, ↑, ←, →, ↓, ↑, L2.

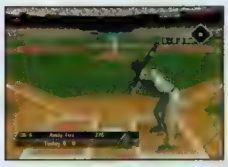
VIEW ENDING
Enable the 'Map screen cheat mode' code. Then at the map screen, press R2, △, R2, △, ↓, □, ○, △, ↑, ↓, ←, →, ↑, R2.







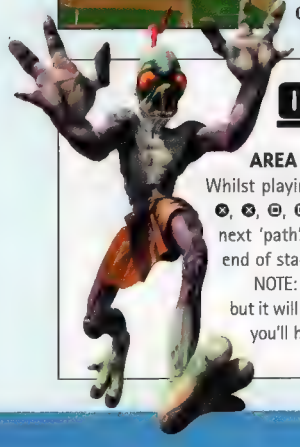




TRIPLE PLAY 2000

AUTOMATIC HOMERUN
While batting up, hold all four shoulder buttons then press △, □, △, ○, ✕, □, ←, →.

CAMERA CONTROL
While playing, hold all four shoulder buttons, then press →, ←, ↑, ↓, →, ←.
To operate the camera do the following:
R1 + directional buttons will turn the camera.
L1 + directional buttons will make the camera move faster.
Just L2 by itself will make the camera zoom out and R2 will make it zoom in.
△ by itself will give a high view.
□ by itself will give a low view.



ODDWORLD: ABE'S EXODDUS

AREA SKIPPING
Whilst playing hold down R1 and press ○, ○, ✕, ✕, □, □. This should then skip you to the next 'path'. You won't see any movies at the end of stages though.

NOTE: the code will take you to the last level but it will NOT take you to the end game screen, you'll have to do the last level yourself.

LEVEL SELECT
To unlock levels, at the main screen, after Abe comes up and says 'Hello', press: ↓, ↑, ←, →, △, □, ○, △, □, ○, ↓, ↑, ←, →. If you did that correctly, you should be able to pick a level.

NOTE: This cheat will affect your Mudokon saving chances.

WILD ARMS

255 ITEMS

Perform the following actions during any round of a battle.

1. Have the first person to attack use a Heal Berry.
2. Have the second person to attack use a Heal Berry.
3. Have the third person swap any item you have one of with the Heal Berries, then attack as normal.

Note: The 255 Item trick is great, as long as you don't win before the above steps are completed. If you do win beforehand, you will not only not receive 255 of the switched item, you will lose it completely!

HOW TO GET THE CHRONO RUNE

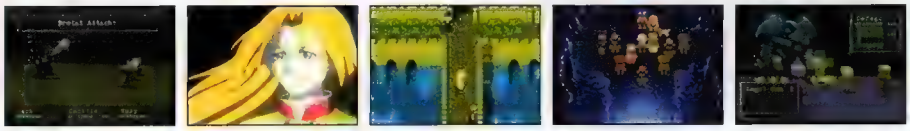
After getting the Courage Guardian, go to the Wind Altar in Baskar village. Zephyr will finally answer you. Have Cecilia use the wand on Chief Baskar's dog and then go to Adlehyde. If you paid money the whole way through the game to the kid in the mayor's house, he'll ask for 100,000 gella. After paying leave and re-enter and talk to the new guy in the pub to get 'Dispellado'. Now, at the odd rings north of Baskar, use Dispellado on the stones in this order: NW SW SE NE W S E N. The Illusion Temple will open and you can get the Chrono Rune.

TEMPLE OF MEMORY

The password for the Memory Temple is 'Emiko'.

TWO PLAYER BATTLES

During a battle insert a second controller into slot two, and the person with the second controller can use the characters also.



X-GAMES PRO BOARDER

ALL CIRCUITS

To unlock all normal circuits, enter the password ⊗, ⊙, ⊗, △, △, ⊟.

CONTROL THE X

While the game is loading, use the D-pad to control the spinning X.

PLAY AS OLLIE B

On the password screen enter △, ⊗, ⊟, ⊗, △, ⊙.

SUPER CIRCUIT AND SECRET BOARDERS

To unlock the super circuit and secret boarders, enter the password △, ⊗, ⊟, ⊗, △, ⊙.

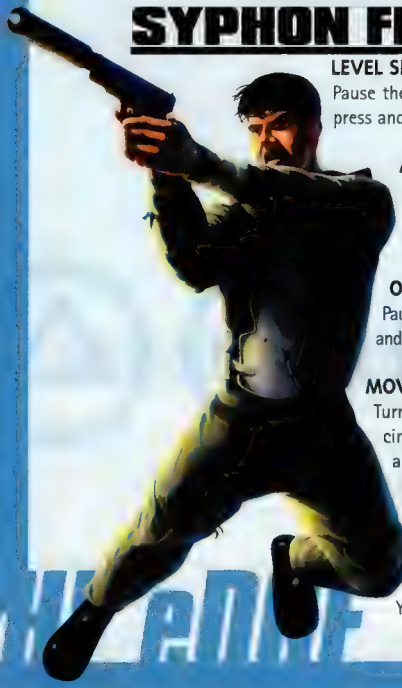
C&C: RETALIATION

EASY ATTRIBUTES

All cheats must be done in the Sidebar during play. Go to your team markers (Square, Triangle etc) and activate by holding down ⊙ and pressing:

Win mission	⊙, ⊙, △, ⊗, ⊗, ⊟.
Lose mission	⊙, ⊗, ⊙, ⊟, ⊟, ⊗.
Reveal all map	△, △, ⊗, ⊙, △, ⊟.
Loadsa cash	⊗, ⊗, ⊟, ⊙, ⊙, ⊙.
Free nuke	⊙, ⊗, ⊙, ⊙, ⊗, ⊟.
Cronosphere	⊟, ⊙, △, ⊗, ⊙, ⊗.
Iron Curtain	⊟, ⊗, ⊙, ⊗, △, △.

SYPHON FILTER



LEVEL SELECT

Pause the game and go to the Options menu, then highlight Select Mission. Now press and hold L1, R1, SELECT, ←, ⊟ and ⊗. All the levels should be shown.

ALL WEAPONS AND AMMO FOR MISSION

Pause the game and highlight the Weapons menu. Then press and hold R1, L1, →, ⊗, ⊟ and ⊙. All of the weapons you can get on that mission should be available.

ONE SHOT KILLS

Pause the game and go to the Weapons menu. Highlight the Silenced 9mm and press and hold ←, R2, SELECT, L1, ⊟, ⊗. You'll hear Gabe say 'Understood' to confirm.

MOVIEDROME

Turn left after jumping out of the window in the saloon and you'll find a cinema. Go in front of the door and pause the game. Go to the Map Menu and press and hold L1, R1, ⊗, →. You should then hear Gabe say 'Got it'. Now exit and unpause. You'll now find yourself inside the cinema! Enter through either door to watch all of the FMV in the game.

WEAKER ENEMIES

Pause the game and highlight the Map menu. Then press →, R1, L1, ⊗. You should hear a laugh to confirm.

DARKSTALKERS 3

Highlight the '?' box, press SELECT x 5, then press any button while holding the last SELECT. Defeat an opponent to possess his or her body.

FIGHT AS MARIONETTE
Highlight the '?' box, press SELECT x 5, then press any button while holding the last SELECT.

FIGHT AS LILLIGAN
Enable the 'Shortcut' option, then select Training, Arcade or Versus mode. Highlight Lillith at the character selection screen, hold SELECT, then press any button to play as Lillith with Morrigan's voice and colours.

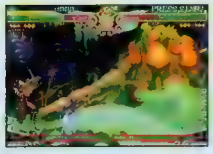
FIGHT AS DARKSTALKERS RIKUO
Enable the 'Shortcut' option, then select Training, Arcade or Versus mode. Highlight Rikuo at the character selection screen, hold SELECT, then press any button.

FIGHT AS MEMORY RESTORED VICTOR
Enable the 'Shortcut' option, then select Training, Arcade or Versus mode. Highlight Victor at the character selection screen, hold SELECT, then press any button.

PLAY AS ORIGINAL GALLON
Successfully complete the game with Gallon. Then highlight Gallon on the character selection screen and press SELECT + PP or SELECT + KK.

PLAY AS HYPER BISHAMON
Successfully complete the game with Bishamon. Then highlight Bishamon on the character selection screen and press SELECT + PP or SELECT + KK.

FIGHT AGAINST HYPER BISHAMON
Begin game play in Single Player mode and do not lose in any round, defeating at least two characters with EX moves.



GEX: DEEP COVER GECKO

Enter the following as Passwords at the Vault Screen

EXTRA LIFE:	▲, ●, Star, ■, ■, ✕.
TEN LIVES:	■, ✕, ●, ●, ▲, ■.
INVINCIBILITY:	■, Star, ▲, ■, ▲, Diamond.
PLAY AS ALFRED:	■, ✕, ▲, ■, Star, Star.
PLAY AS CUZ:	■, Diamond, ■, ■, ▲, Diamond.
PLAY AS REX:	■, Star, Star, ■, ▲, ▲.
VIEW FMV SEQUENCE:	●, ▲, ■, Star, Diamond, Star.
VIEW FMV SEQUENCE 2:	Diamond, Star, ■, ✕, ▲, ●.

INVINCIBILITY
Pause the game, hold L2 and press ↓, ↑, ←, ←, ▲, →, ↓. Gex should now be invincible.

GEX QUOTES
Pause the game, hold L2 and press ↓, →, ←, ●, ↑, →. Unpause and press SELECT to hear a witty Gex line.

COOL BOARDERS 2 - MINI GUIDE

BUST THE MOVES

HIDE AND SECRETS

ET'S SNOW JOB

SNOW BALLS

BOSSY

MIRRORED TRACKS

EXTRA TRACK

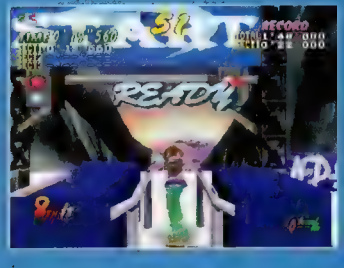
FREESTYLE SP BOARD

ALL-AROUND SP BOARD

HARD MODE

DIRTY, SMUTTY FILTH

COMBOS



R-TYPES

ALL WEAPONS
Pause either R-Type game. Hold L2 and press →, ←, →, ↓, ←, ↑, →. Now press ▲, R1, ✕, ○, or R2 to get all weapons.

LEVEL SELECT
Highlight either R-Type or R-Type 2 at the main screen. Quickly press L2 10 times and R2 10 times. Start the game and pause. You should now see a stage select option.

SPEED SELECT
Pause either R-Type game. Hold L2 and press →, ↑, →, ↑, ↓, ←, ↓, ←. Now press ○ to increase or ✕ to decrease the speed.

BUST-A-MOVE 4

EXTRA SET OF PUZZLES
Press R1, ○, ✕, R1, ○ at the title screen. You'll hear a sound and a small face will appear at the bottom right of the screen. Now select Puzzle mode and Arcade to play a whole new set of puzzles.

ROLLCAGE

ENABLE HARD AND MIRROR MODES
Enter the password EADNCMAH.

AIR HORNS
Enter the password AIRHORNS. Press SELECT while playing to hear an '80s airhorn.

DEATHMATCH MODE
Come in first place in all tracks in a league.

MIRROR MODE
Come in first place in all leagues.

SPEED BURST
When you're waiting for the race to start, tap ✕ as fast and as many times as you can to start faster.

A BUG'S LIFE – MINI GUIDE

KNOW YOUR ENEMY...

MOSQUITO:

BEETLE

GIANT WORM:

HARD SHELLED BUG:

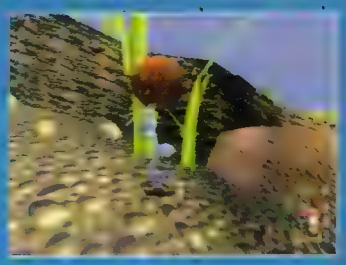
WASP:

DADDY LONG LEGS:

BLUE BOTTLE:

HARD BACK BUG:

THE SEEDS OF CHANGE



NEED FOR SPEED ROAD CHALLENGE

TITAN HOTROD
Enter Hotrod as the username to unlock the Titan Hotrod car in Test Drive, Single Race, Hot Pursuit and Versus modes. 'Cheat Activated' will appear to confirm correct code entry.
Note: Save game is disabled whilst this cheat is activated.

PHANTOM
Enter Flash as the username to unlock the Phantom car in Test Drive, Single Race, Hot Pursuit and Versus modes. The phrase 'Cheat Activated' will appear to confirm correct code entry.
Note: Save game is disabled whilst this cheat is activated.

HELICOPTER
Enter Whirly as the username to unlock the Helicopter car in Test Drive and Versus modes.
The phrase 'Cheat Activated' will appear to confirm correct code entry.
Note: Save game is disabled whilst this cheat is activated.

TURN SIGNAL AND HEADLIGHTS
Hold L1 and press ← or → to activate the turn signals. Hold L1 and press ↓ to turn on the hazard lights and press ↑ to turn on the headlights.

EXTRA TRACKS
The only method to unlock all the tracks in the game thus far is by opening them up within the Tournament and Special Events modes. By finishing 1st, 2nd or 3rd in a Tournament or Special Event race, you open up the tracks for other modes such as: Test Drive, Hot Pursuit, single player and two player match-ups.

EASY CARS AND MONEY
You must own at least one car and have enough money ($20,000) to buy a new car. Once you have this, copy the NFS Road Challenge save game file to another memory card. While both memory cards are in the PlayStation, select the High Stakes mode (in the two player submenu). At the beginning of the race, forfeit player two. When you reach the in-game menu, you should now have two of the same car. Copy the saved game over player two's memory card again and repeat. You can now sell all the cars you've won for easy money.

Temperamental is the best word to describe these three cheats for NFS Road Challenge. They seem to vary on the car and course selected, so if it doesn't work, try again, if it still doesn't work, chances are it's the wrong combination!

DASHBOARD VIEW
Press START to load the race after selecting the game options (track and car selection) then immediately hold ↑ + △ + ✕ before the loading screen appears. Keep the buttons held until you start the race.

DRUNK MODE
Press START to load the race after selecting the game options (track and car selection) then immediately hold ↑ + R1 + L1 before the loading screen appears. Keep the buttons held until you start the race. The screen will become blurred, with ten cars appearing instead of one.

SLOW CPU CARS
Select Tournament or Special Events mode. Press START to load the race after selecting the game options (track and car selection) then immediately hold ← + ○ + ● before the loading screen appears. Keep the buttons held until the loading screen disappears.

GEX: DEEP COVER GECKO

The ultra cool-blooded and silk tongued secret agent, Gex, returns to your console in this third adventure. This time he must rescue the beautiful Agent Xtra from the clutches of the evil Rex, and you're probably going to need STATION to help you. We've broken down all 24 levels, included tips from both Gex himself and friendly butler Alfred.

Wanna' be a hero?...

MISSION CONTROL

The heart of Gex's mission to free Agent Xtra. From here Gex can use the training facility 'The Wreck Room' to hone his skills. There are items to pick up, bonus games and new levels to be opened.

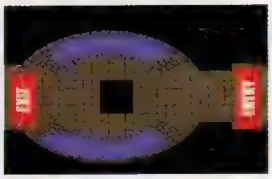
WRECK ROOM

Like Batman, Gex has a training area of the cave. Here you can practice all the moves and fighting skills Gex can perform, including his crouch and kick abilities...

AREA A

Entrance

Give Alfred a tail-whip (● = tail-whip) and listen to what he says. Now enter the statue head's mouth by standing on the paw platform.



AREA B

Training type – Combat

Here you face a number of moving targets to hit and destroy. Tail whip Alfred for more information.

AREA C

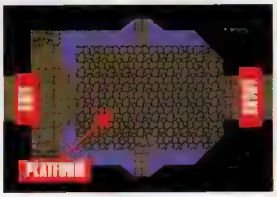
Training type – Operating platforms

From the first platform leap up to the right and collect the bonus coin. Then leap on to the next platform and it'll raise upward. This allows you to reach the next one and exit.

AREA D

Training type – Operating platforms 2

To the left of the platform is a ledge, here you find a paw coin. Now jump on the first platform to elevate the second one. Jump on to the second one and then jump over to the exit.



AREA E

Training type – Jumping large gaps/Kick jumps

Here you must perfect the karate kick jump to clear the three gaps ahead. Tail whip Alfred first to operate the first platform. Run around a bit, then hold R2 and press ✕ to jump/kick. Now hop down to the water below and pick up the paw coin there. Jump the gaps using the kick jump and take the reward remote at the end.

You now return to Mission Control.

SECRET TV LEVEL

In Gex's cave you'll see three recording devices. One on the lower level and two on the higher level. Whack the central part of all these devices to open a secret level behind the picture of a woman. Go into this cave and go through the TV.

Choose one of the following options...

COLLECT 50 COINFLIES AS GEX

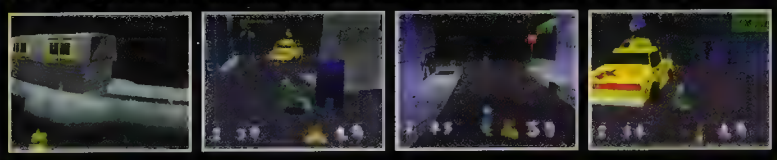
Speed around this busy mini town and collect 50 coinflies for a bonus.

COLLECT 50 COINFLIES AS REX

A change of appearance for Gex, but the objective is the same. Collect 50 coins for a bonus!

COLLECT 50 COINFLIES AS CUZ

Cuz is the guise for Gex this time. You must hurry to collect 50 coins for the bonus.



THE POLE – TOTALLY SCROOGED

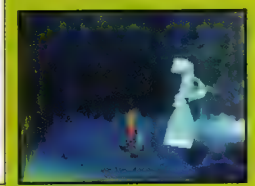
Gex hates the cold but he must defeat the evil Satan (Santa's evil twin) to get closer to saving the scrumptious Agent Xtra. Here's the lowdown on your polar mission including a map of the area to guide you through.

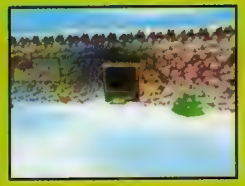
Mission Objectives

- **Create five ice sculptures.**
- **Whack the snowboarding Elves.**
- **Defeat evil Santa.**
- **Gain 100 Coinflies.**

CREATE FIVE ICE SCULPTURES

Gex must explore this winter wonderland in search of five ice sculptures. When located whip that lump of ice into a lovely image of Gex. Below (on our exclusive map) we reveal all five ice sculpture locations.



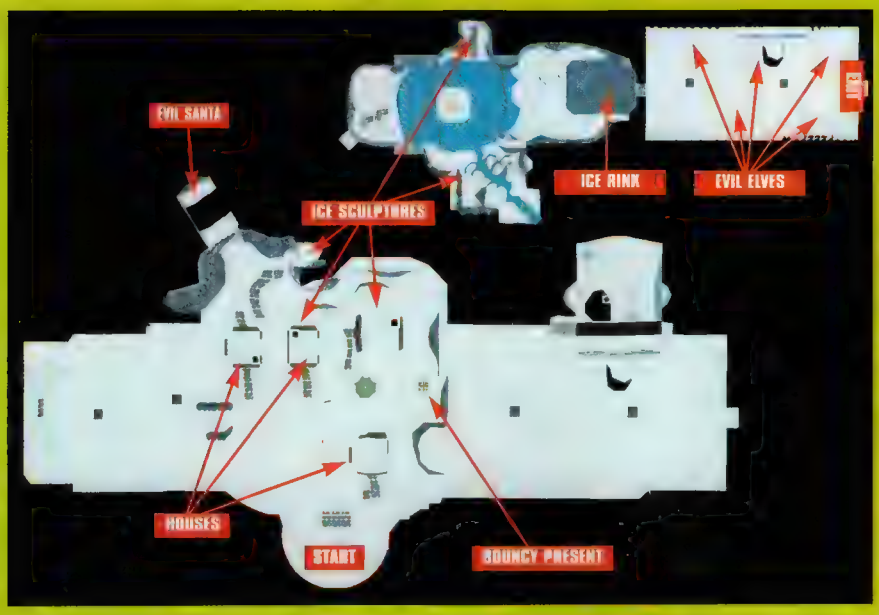


ALFRED'S GAME TIPS

Alfred says... Sir! whack that first elf to gain a paw. Also, why don't you try whacking the letter boxes for more fly coins?

GEX'S HEALTH TIPS

Gex says... Snowballs! I hate those things man. Oh and don't try and send me down a smoking chimney... duh!



WHACK THE SNOWBOARDING ELVES

Prone to confrontation, Gex must take out the snowboarding elves on this polar piste. Use the spin and jump to attack them. Check out our polar map for their locations.

ALFRED'S GAME TIPS

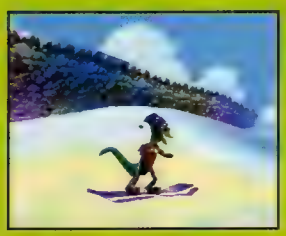
Alfred says... Why not try playing Santa on a non-smoking chimney Sir? Smashing presents, so why not smash them?

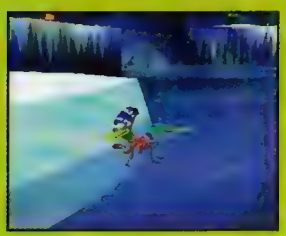
DEFEAT EVIL SANTA

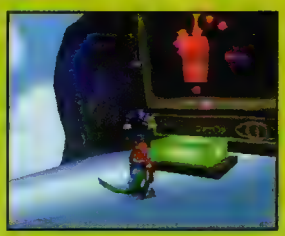
Here you must face off against the evil Santa twin, Satan (see map for location). As he throws presents at you, spin your tail and rebound these deadly packages back at him. He soon falls on his fat red flab for good, just watch the timing of your tail whips.

GEX'S HEALTH TIPS

Gex says... Fire? No thanks. stay away. Water, I don't mind but watch that air gauge!







THE POLE – BONUS GAME

MARSUPIAL MADNESS

Mission Objective

- Ring 10 bells.

You're in the pouch of a friendly Kangaroo. There are ten bells between the bottom section and top. Climb upward avoiding the Koala Bears. Make sure you get every bell on the level you're on before going up to the next.

ALFRED'S GAME TIPS

Alfred says... Those soldiers and penguins need a tail whip to give up the goodies, Sir. After all, gain 100 fly coins and you'll get that remote!

WALL CRAWLER

Being a slimy little lizard, Gex sticks to the wall like Tori Spelling in a mini-series. Watch out for marks on the wall such as footprints (Egyptian level) or skulls (Pirate level) that indicate climbable walls.

You'll now return to Mission Control where a red paw token awaits you. This token opens the red paw token door of mission control. This leads you to Lake Flaccid.

CLUELESS – MYSTERY TV

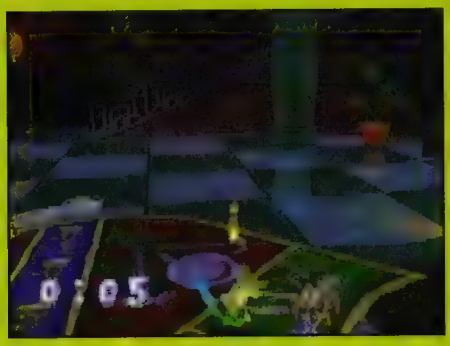
After the icy plains of the Pole, Gex can head into the door from Mission Control called Clueless. Here you'll find Mystery TV, Gex puts on his best Sherlock outfit to solve the mystery and complete the mission objectives...

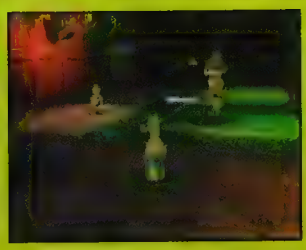
Mission Objectives

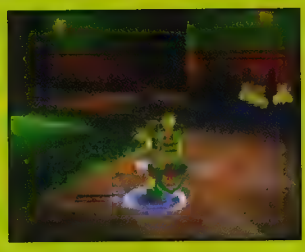
- **Survive the hedge maze.**
- **Break the three blood coolers, again!**
- **Find and beat the three mini games.**
- **Gain 100 Fly coins.**

SURVIVE THE HEDGE MAZE

Check out our map to find your way to and through this hedge maze. It's not much of a challenge with STATION in your corner. Saying that, though, watch out for the old hunters and giant bears!

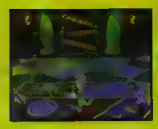


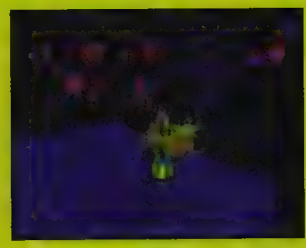


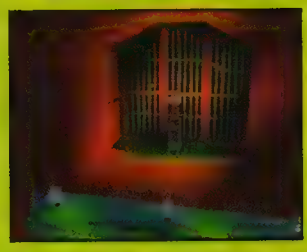


GEX'S HEALTH TIPS

Gex says... Bears hit me with a lot of power so make tail whip attacks high and quick.







FIND AND BEAT THE THREE MINI GAMES

Once you locate a mini game 'spy glass' marker stand on it and press the look button, . Look in the direction of the object (ie. the kitchen sink), and you will be shrunk and transported into a mini game scenario.

The Kitchen Sink

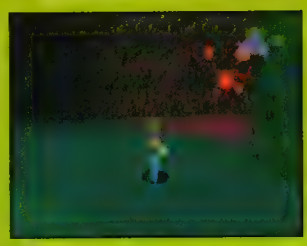
You find yourself in the sink. Pop all the bubbles using the whip. Once you've burst all the bubbles a bonus coin will appear on the surface.

The Bear's Head

You must kill all the parasites here to obtain a bonus coin. Watch out, these bugs bite!

The Pool Table

To gain access to the pool table game head up stairs to the top room of the main staircase. Hit the statue in this room to operate the steps (from a bookcase) in the room below. In the game you'll need to bash all the balls to gain a bonus coin.

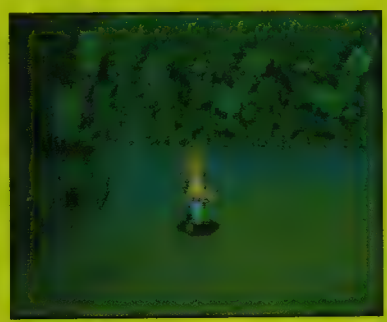


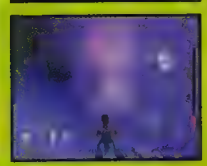
BREAK THE THREE BLOOD COOLERS, AGAIN!

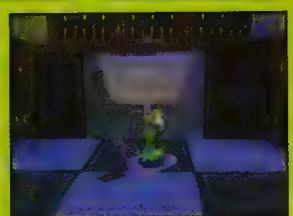
Cooler's usually contain water. In Gex's world, however, the coolers are stocked up with blood. Find and destroy all three of them using our map. You'll need to head to the vampire changing room first (to hover). See our map for the locations.

ALFRED'S GAME TIPS

Alfred says... The statues operate hidden walls etc. Bash them and see what happens.







The bonus games shouldn't present too much of a problem. Don't let them distract you overly from the main point of your quest though!

LAKE FLACCID

There are three areas to Lake Flaccid leading in to new levels. Explore the lake fully before entering the levels as there are a few goodies to be discovered.

ALFRED'S GAME TIPS

Alfred says... Sir, hop on to my boat on Lake Flaccid and I'll take you around to see the sights. Collect bonus items by jumping from the boat!

ROAD TO RUINS – HOLY MOSES

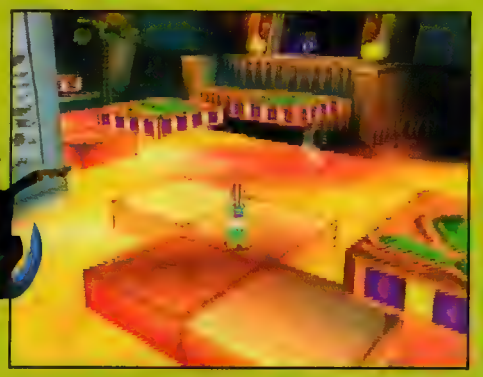
Head inside the pyramid for some ancient Egyptian fun. You'll see a bonus area to the left blocked by a gate. To open it, step on all four paw switches in the floor. You'll find a few hints opposite.

Mission Objectives

- Recover the three staffs of Ra.
- Release the spirits from the three lost arks.
- Ride the camel to the ancient temple.

RECOVER THE THREE STAFFS OF RA

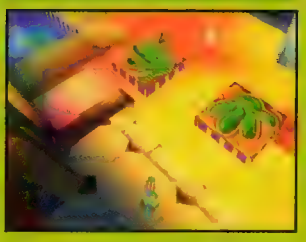
Knowing where the staffs are is half the battle. Check out our map to find all three staff locations. Once done check out some serious *Raiders of the Lost Ark* homage footage.



Must be a lizard of a pharaoh'ld size to leave those prints.

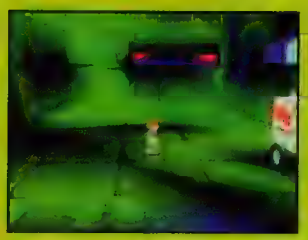
GEX'S HEALTH TIPS

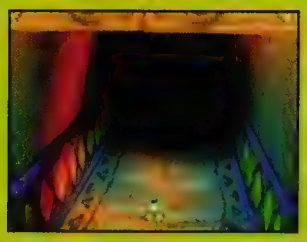
Gex says... Keep my tail out of the quick sand, or I'll become part of the furniture!



RELEASE THE SPIRITS FROM THE THREE LOST ARKS

Remember what the ark of the covenant looked like in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*? Oh well you need to find three of these sacred crates. Each one is protected by a guard (horrendously similar looking to the baddies in *Stargate*) they have little strength and should be attacked at close range. Once beaten you can collect the ark and move on.



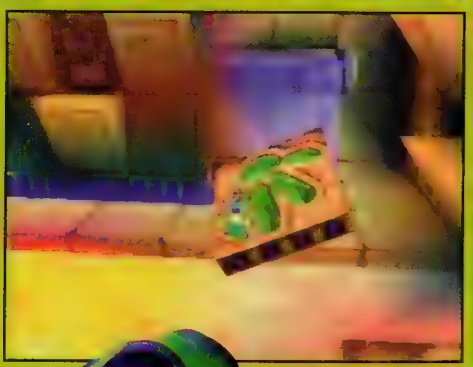


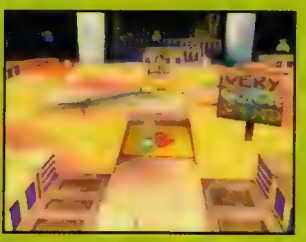
ALFRED'S GAME TIPS

Alfred says... Sir, The snake isn't harmful but actually helpful, give it a whack and see what you get back!

RIDE THE CAMEL TO THE ANCIENT TEMPLE

Probably the easiest objective of the three. Take a camel over a stretch of hot quick sand to the ancient temple entrance. Stop off halfway on your right at the drinks machine for a few fly coins. Once inside the temple you must scale the walls carefully to the top. Here you'll find the TV and plenty of other goodies.





GEX'S HEALTH TIPS

Gex says... I'd better stay on the camel to avoid the deadly quick sand. Also flame throwers can dislodge me from a wall climb so take it easy!

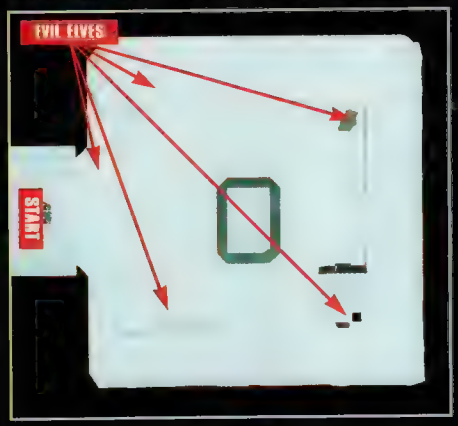
BONUS GAME

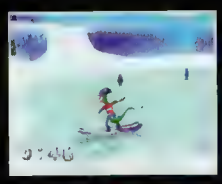
GEXTREME SPORTS

Mission Objectives

- Whack five snowboarding elves.

You're on the snowboard again. Take out five evil present stealing elves with the board whip. There are three on the top outside ledge and two in the bottom. See our map for all the locations. Collect the watches to give you more time.





ALFRED'S GAME TIPS

Alfred says... Take out the top three elves first, then go down and get the other two. Try and corner the elves if they run away, Sir.

HOT DOG HILL – WAR IS HECK

Gex gets his combats and helmet on for battle in this war level. The search lights scan the base for the intruding lizard... failure is not an option.

Mission Objectives

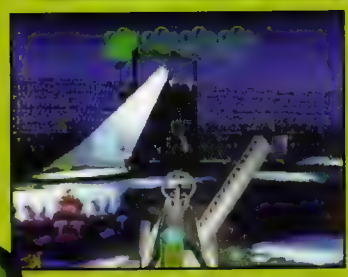
- **Shoot the search lights and whack five tents.**
- **Destroy the city and find five secret bug crates.**
- **Survive the maze and steal the secret plans.**
- **Gain 100 fly coins.**

ALFRED'S GAME TIPS

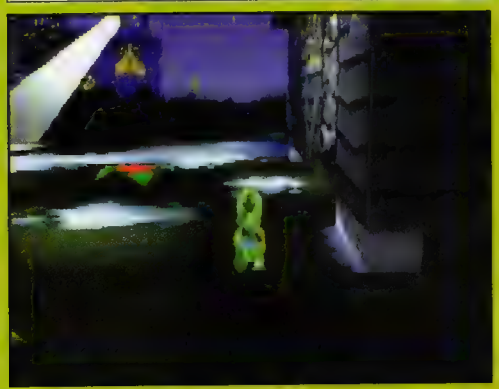
Alfred says... Sir, the searchlights spot you and the tower guards shoot you. So stay out of the light.

SHOOT THE SEARCH LIGHTS AND WHACK FIVE TENTS

Use the machine guns to take out the search lights, then tail whip those tents. See our map for general guidance (a good name for a villain...).



Gun fascination must mean something in Freudian terms you know.



DESTROY THE CITY AND FIVE SECRET BUG CRATES

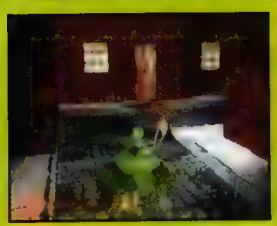
Take control of the tank and go waste the city. You'll find the central building is a helipad so come here when you've finished. Shoot out all the buildings and search them for bug crates. There are no enemy forces here so take your time. The central building has the helipad. This is where the TV appears once all the bug crates and buildings are destroyed.

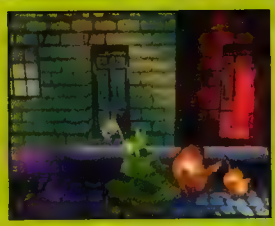
GEX'S HEALTH TIPS

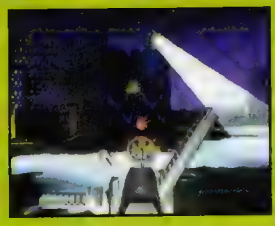
Gex says... I don't react well to bullets so keep moving. But watch your step, those big red things are sensitive landmines!

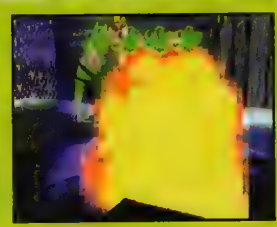
ALFRED'S GAME TIPS

Alfred says... Sir, the sergeants throw grenades, evade these attacks by using the machine guns on them.



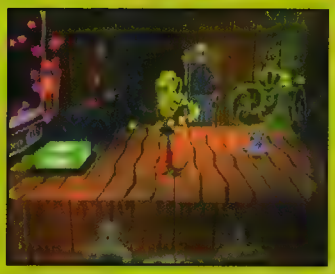


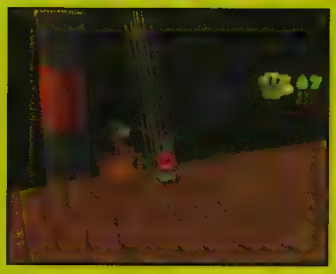




SURVIVE THE MAZE AND STEAL THE SECRET PLANS

A tricky combat maze full of danger. Take out the search lights using the various machine gun points. Watch out for the walking grenades, they have an explosive personality! Head through the maze and into the hut, use the machine gun on the two sergeants, then steal the secret plans. See our map for help and locations.





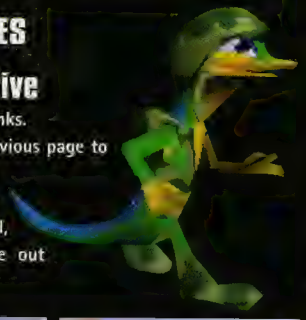
WAR IS HECK – BONUS GAME

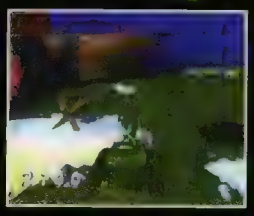
WAR AND PIECES

Mission Objective

- Destroy 10 Rez tanks.

Use our map on the previous page to find all ten tank locations. Don't waste time tucking into wall, plough on in and take out those tanks!





BUCCANEER PROGRAM – CUT CHEESE ISLAND

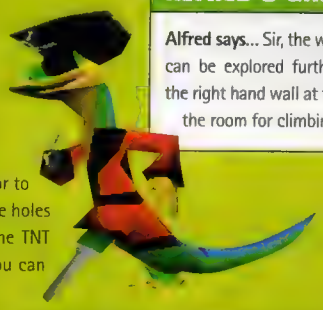
Head to Cut Cheese Island for this pirate adventure level. See our map to guide you to your objectives. You'll face danger around every corner but with our guide and map at your side, you'll be back for the bonus round in no time.

Mission Objectives

- Survive the wall of death.
- Sink four pirate ships.
- Zip on down to the TV.
- Gain 100 fly coins, if you can.

ALFRED'S GAME TIPS

Alfred says... Sir, the wall of death can be explored further. Check the right hand wall at the end of the room for climbing prints.



SURVIVE THE WALL OF DEATH

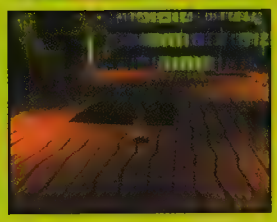
See our map for its location. Use the holes in the floor to negotiate this stretch. As you get closer to the end the holes are further apart, so don't waste any time. Ignite the TNT and you'll be blasted up to the ledge above. Here you can collect your remote.

SINK FOUR PIRATE SHIPS

From the wall of death you find yourself on board a huge pirate ship. Head down to the centre hull area of this ship and enter one of the doors there. Take control of the cannon and sink the ship in the background. You must repeat this in the three remaining rooms.

GEX'S HEALTH TIPS

Gex says... Skeletal pirates hold deadly blades and can defend normal tail whips, try high jump attacks or running attacks.



BONUS GAME – THE ABYSSMAL

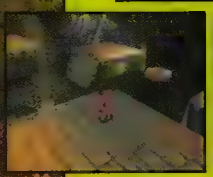
Mission Objective

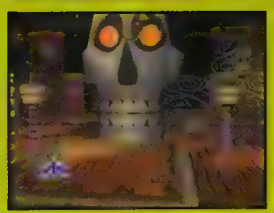
- Collect 50 coinflies.

This underwater bonus level is very impressive. You must dive from an underwater base and scuba dive around a ship wreck to collect 50 fly coins. You'll find several air pockets along the way and a hole to the left of the ship (facing the bow) that opens into an air tight room. Here you can power up the guns of this old battle ship. Now swim up to the bridge and whip the switch to fire at the cliff side. Blow it open, swim in and collect more air and coins.

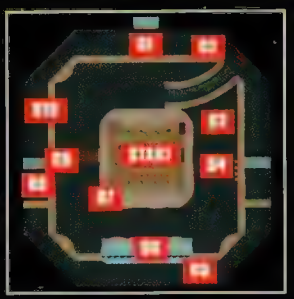
ZIP ON DOWN TO THE TV

Head up in to the rigging and make your way across to the stern. Swinging barrels, pirate skeletons and narrow platforms are in between you and successfully completing this last part of this level. Once at the stern you'll find the remote and TV.





CUT CHEESE ISLAND – BONUS GAME



Mission Objective

- Eat 10 rubber ducks.

Gex gets on board a little crocodile for this mini adventure. Chomp 10 rubber pirate ducks to complete this bonus level. Those mines are edible too, so don't avoid them just chew!

ALFRED'S GAME TIPS

Alfred says... Use the map, Sir, to locate all the ducks. Watch out for those cannon balls!

WESTERN TV – THE ORGAN TRAIL

Welcome to the Wild West. Gex needs all his wits when it comes to trailing this frontier. The ghostly gunslingers wait around every corner to gun down the green one. To make matters worse a storm rages in the skies above as Gex makes his journey on a manky mule toward the mountain's peak.

Mission Objective

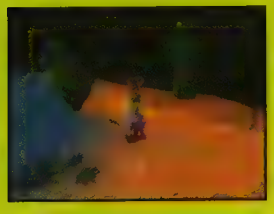
- Visit the world's largest mound of poop.
- Collect five of a kind.
- Climb the mountain.

ALFRED'S GAME TIPS

Alfred says... Those ghostly gunslingers can be defeated by smashing their ashes. Look out for an urn near by.

COLLECT FIVE OF A KIND

Cards have been scattered over the level. Collect them on your way up the mountain and then collect another remote. None of them are hidden from view.



GEX'S HEALTH TIPS

Gex says... Avoid contact with those cacti, they do as much damage as one of those giant scorpions!

VISIT THE WORLD'S LARGEST MOUND OF POOP

Take your trusty mule and hop across the mine carts to the mound of poop. Here at the top of this smelly mountain you'll find a remote and a TV.

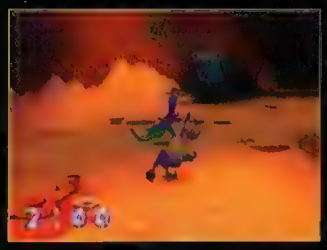
CLIMB THE MOUNTAIN

Take it slowly up this steep mountain. There are scorpions, ghostly bandits and sheer drops to stop you hitting the peak. When you come to the waterfall canyon you'll need to dismount and climb over the left side (climbable area is indicated by shining rock). On the other side you must flip the red switch on top of the crate there. This operates the mine cart and you'll be able to jump over with the mule. Now head through the mines and up to the top of the mountain to complete this level.

BONUS GAME – TRUE GRITS

Mission Objective

- Smash 10 chicken crates.



Break open 10 Chicken crates to complete this bonus round. Use the mule to scour the first area and you should find four crates. Now head up and across the old bridges to pick up the rest.

GEX'S HEALTH TIPS

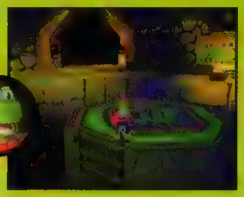
[illegible] holes in the bridges!

INVASION OF THE BODY SLAMMERS – WWGEX WRESTLING

To get here smash and enter the locker to the left of the entrance to Lake Flaccid. This is quite simply fight time. Get whipping with that tail, and don't let that big lug get his paws on you. Once beaten you'll receive a green paw token.

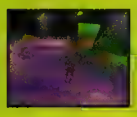
ALFRED'S GAME TIPS

Alfred says... This muscle bound thug is no match for you sir, just keep him at a distance with your tail whip manoeuvre!



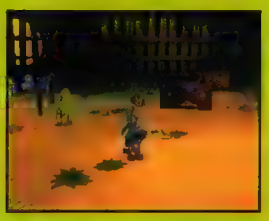
COLLECT THREE GOLDEN APPLES

You'll find these apples in the trees of this level. Usually protected by vicious birds these eggs come at a price. Use the trees' bouncy leaves to bounce to the top and claim your prize.



GEX'S HEALTH TIPS

[illegible] leaves can throw you in to oblivion if you don't watch your step. Be patient and watch your jump height.



SLAPPY VALLEY

This lush green valley has danger around every corner. See our map for each new level location and use it to guide you through...

UNSOLVED MYSTERIES

Welcome to the splendour of the Roman era. Gex gets into character to avoid a Greek tragedy and come closer to saving the pouting Agent Xtra. We give you a guide to each of the games, including a full map of the area... bonus!

Mission Objective

- **Break the arms off five statues.**
- **Collect three golden apples.**
- **Find the TV at the end of the rainbow.**

BREAK THE ARMS OFF FIVE STATUES

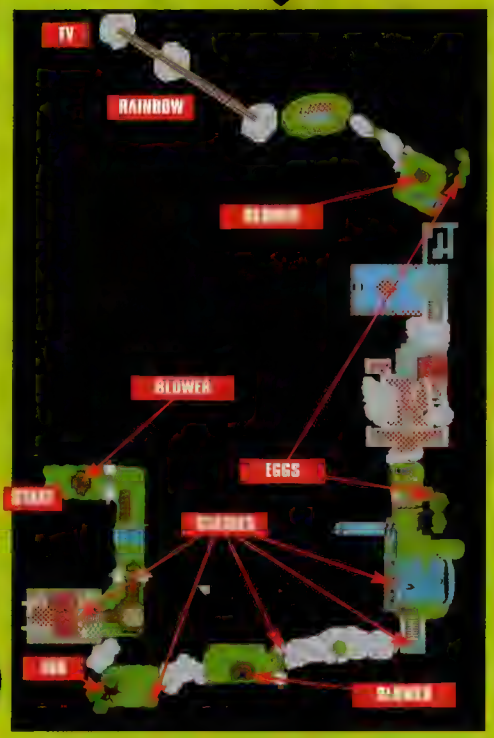
1st Statue – Get the Blue ice fly and freeze the skeleton. Use him to hop up on to the platform there and get muscle power. Now go up to the first building and smash the dark blocks on the pillars (both sides). Now go around to the right side and climb the ivy. Climb up to the roof and smash the statue.

2nd Statue – Get across the crumbling blocks to the tree section and here you'll find the second statue awaiting a smashing.

3rd Statue – Use the up-draft to the left of this plateau to reach the third statue.

4th Statue – On top of the wall on the second waterfall area.

5th Statue – Towards the end in the coliseum area is where you'll find the last statue.

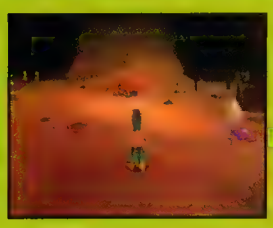


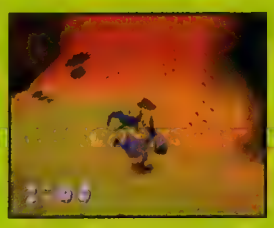
ALFRED'S GAME TIPS

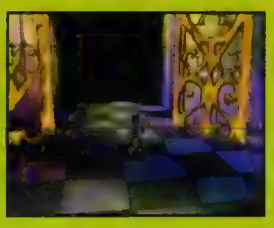
Alfred says... The dark areas of the pillars must be smashed using the strength enhancers, Sir.

FIND THE TV AT THE END OF THE RAINBOW

Toward the end of the level and should be the final task. Head over a treacherous rainbow toward the end. Be careful not to fall off the edge. At the end you won't find a pot of gold, instead a handy TV and reward remote (Doh!).





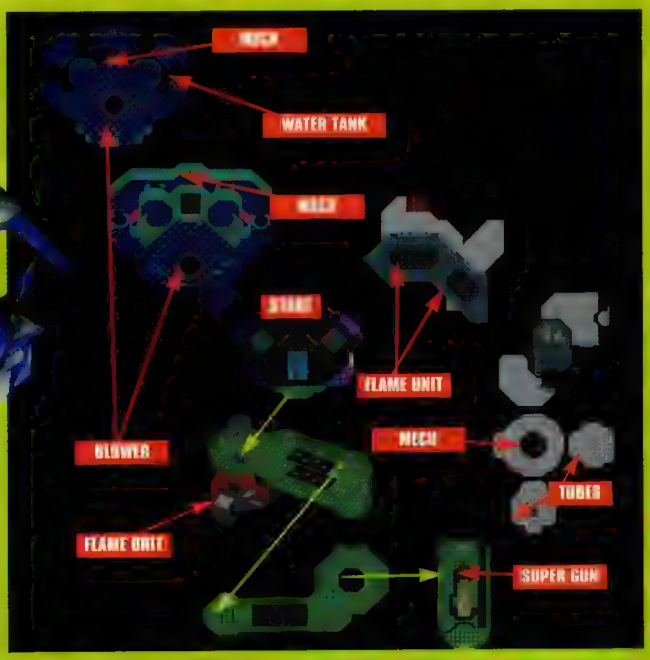


ANMIME CHANNEL – WHEN SUSHI GOES BAD

Japanese anime is the flavour of this next slice of Gex's adventure. The loopy lizard must face giant robots, psycho school girls and flame throwers.

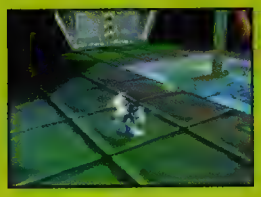
Mission Objectives

- Demolish the three protoculture tubes.
- Deactivate the planet destroyer.
- Zip on down to the TV.
- Gain 100 fly coins, if you can.



DEMOLISH THE THREE PROTOCULTURE TUBES

From the ramp in the first room, take the door on the right. Use our map to guide you through the perils ahead. You must destroy all three tubes then return to the main room.



ALFRED'S GAME TIPS

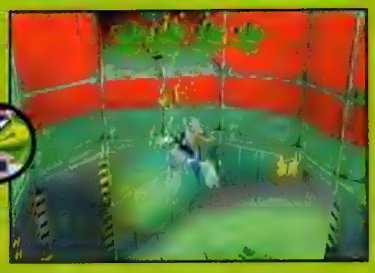
Alfred says... Sir, those big rogue mechs aren't as tough as they seem. A few jump whips will knock them out.

DEACTIVATE THE PLANET DESTROYER

A huge weapon that destroys planets must be deactivated. From the ramp in the main first room head to the central door (behind the ramp). Use our map to find the weapon. Once inside the weapon chamber hop up on to it and then hop on to the catwalk. Open the control room using the switch at the end there. Then whip the switch in the control room to deactivate the weapon. Now step back on to the lift and head back to the main room.

GEX'S HEALTH TIPS

Gex says... Those flame cannons come out of the floor, jump over them to avoid being fried! Avoid rogue mech fire by getting close, then attack!



FIND AND DESTROY THE FIVE ROGUE MECHS

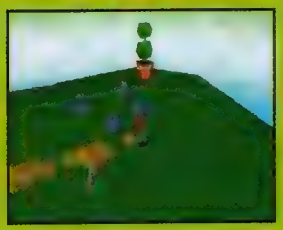
Take the door on the left to find these 'bots. When you come to the main large room you'll see a central blower and two flying robot attackers. Destroy these two robots to activate the blower. Once flying up drop on to the ledge above. Here you'll meet three 'bots, destroy them (easy, just keep tail whipping them) and this opens the panels to the water tank below. Swim down and flick the switch, this powers up the central blower. Allowing you to reach and destroy the last two 'bots.

LIZARD OF OZ – LIONS, TIGERS AND GEX

Mission Objectives

- Destroy Oz brain.

You'll find yourself fighting the giant Oz brain in this black glass floored arena. Check our map for the cannon positions. They appear for one shot then you're attacked by Rezlings. Keep moving and keep an eye on the next cannon position.

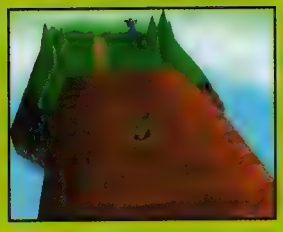


FAIRYTALES TV – RED RIDING IN THE HOOD

Your favourite fairy tales become your worst nightmare in this level. A hoard of evil Rez-ites have invaded this fairy tale land and turned it on its head. Only Gex can save the day... but will he get a princess?

Mission Objectives

- Climb the beanstalk.
- Destroy the three little pig's houses.
- Jump over the three candlesticks.



CLIMB THE BEANSTALK

Take it slowly climbing this giant beanstalk (see our map for beanstalk location). Green leaves are normal, brown leaves fall away under your feet and the purple leaves are bouncy. Watch out for bumble bees, they can knock you off and send you crashing to the bottom again.

DESTROY THE THREE LITTLE PIG'S HOUSES

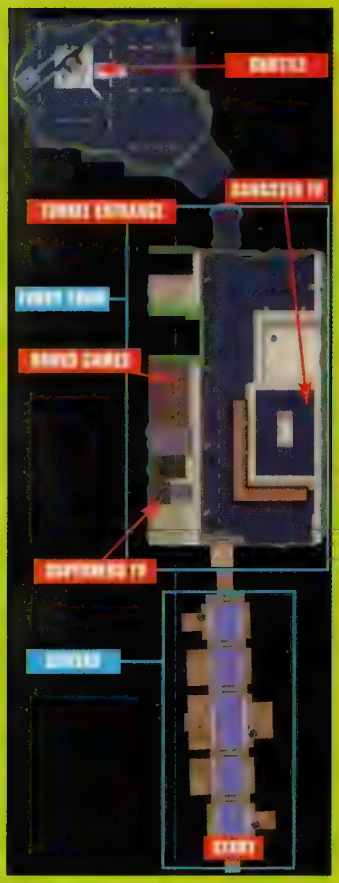
Locate and destroy all three of the pig's houses. You'll find wolves guarding these homes so be careful. This piglet home destruction might be a bit traumatic for the hardcore fairy tale fan. But Gex must complete his mission.

JUMP OVER THE THREE CANDLESTICKS

Yup you guessed it. Jump over the three candlesticks. You'll find them on the beanstalk as you climb it. There's only three but watch your step.

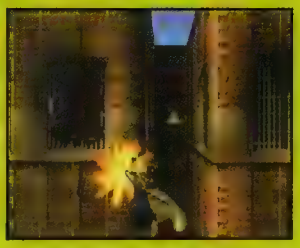
ALFRED'S GAME TIPS

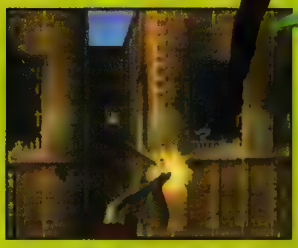
Alfred says... Watch your step climbing this beanstalk. Brown leaves will fall away under Sir's feet.



FUNKY TOWN

In Funky town Gex gets to play superhero and take his tommy gun to the gangsters in two more explosive levels. Head up to the building on the right to drop down to Gangster TV. Otherwise clamber up the cargo crates to the building on the left to play the superhero level.





GANGSTER TV – MY THREE GOONS

This gangster laden level offers plenty of danger for Gex. He must prowl this danger filled mob land to complete three deadly mission objectives...

Mission Objective

- Burn five bundles of funny money.
- Destroy five root beer barrels.
- Save Cuz from the mob.

There's plenty of variation in the gameplay throughout, but nothing beats the first person tasks!

BURN FIVE BUNDLES OF FUNNY MONEY

These bundles of dodgy cash need to be fire bug burned. Pick up a fire bug, aim and shoot at the pile. Then stand back and admire the bonfire. Get five bundles burning to complete this part of the mission.

ALFRED'S GAME TIPS

Alfred says... Those gangsters pack a punch, Sir. Make your whip attacks high and fast. Try using fire bugs on those gun wielding bad guys.

DESTROY FIVE ROOT BEER BARRELS

These barrels of root beer are scattered in your path. Simply smash five barrels on your way around this Mobster filled level. None are hidden from view.

GEX'S HEALTH TIPS

Gex says... Gunfire hurts, move quickly to avoid it. You can use the fire used to fire barrels on you get a barrel you'll get flung into the air also. This helps if there's something you can't reach.

SAVE CUZ FROM THE MOB

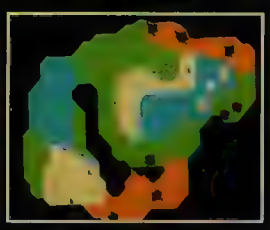
On board the ex-Titanic you'll find Cuz. He's locked in a cage that needs a fire bug blast. Pick up one at the dock entrance and let it hover around you as you make your way back up to the ship. Now blast the lock and let your little friend go free.

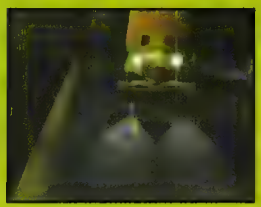
GANGSTER TV – BONUS GAME CHEESY RIDER

Mission Objective

- Collect 50 coinflies.

This mini island is littered with fly coins and all you have to do is belt those little lizard legs around and collect 50. Easy eh?



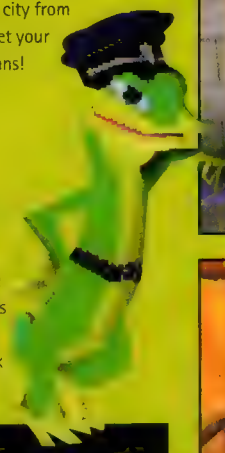


SUPER HERO SHOW – SUPERZEROES

Gex gets to play hero in this mini city. He must save the city from mad bombers, escaped convicts and er... stray cats. So get your cape and curl your fringe for some superhero shenanigans!

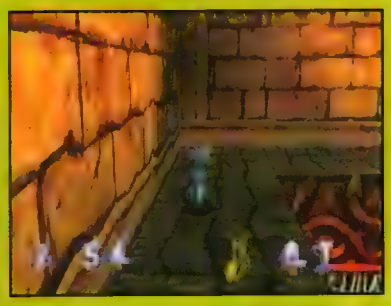
Mission Objective

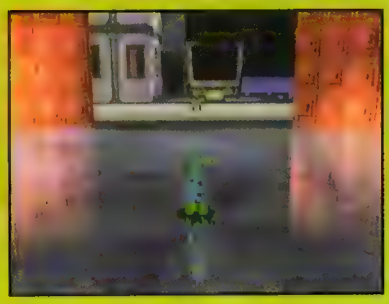
- Defeat the mad bomber.
- Get the three stray cats.
- Find the five escaped convicts.



DEFEAT THE MAD BOMBER

A mad bomber threatens to level this city, and only the green skinned one can stop him. You'll find his bombs deadly so tail whip and get out the way. After a few hits he'll be destroyed, just watch your step and check out our city map for his location.



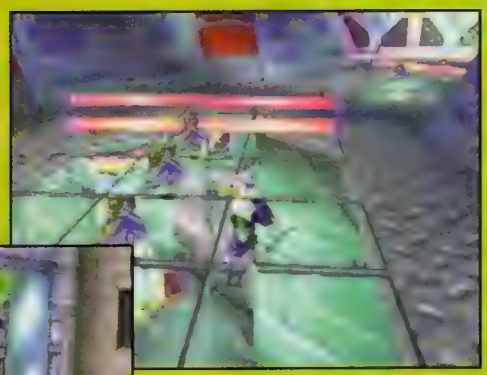


ALFRED'S GAME TIPS

Alfred says... Any walls with paws can be climbed, Sir. Keep your bug eyes peeled for paw prints. You can also climb glass (blue), Sir.

GET THE THREE STRAY CATS

Easy enough, three stray cats roam this level. Simply tail whip all three to succeed, but don't let them touch you. See our city map.



GEX'S HEALTH TIPS

Gex says... Watch out! Stare at the convict to the left of [illegible] throws dynamite!

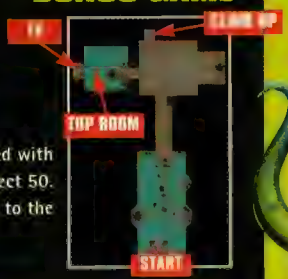
SUPER HERO SHOW – BONUS GAME

BRAVEHEARTLESS

Mission Objective

- Collect 50 coinflies.

This underground water hole is littered with fly coins and all you have to do is collect 50. The second area requires you to climb to the top of the room to succeed.

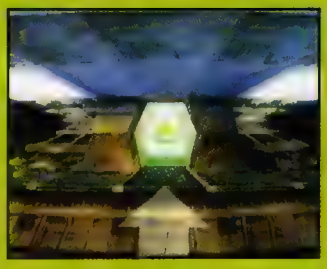


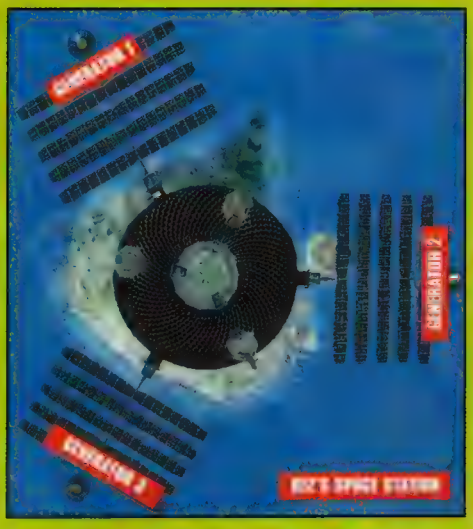
FIND THE FIVE ESCAPED CONVICTS

Five convicts have broken out the city prison and are roaming the streets. Only a hero of the lizard kind can take them out. Watch out – some of these harden crims throw dynamite! See our map for the locations.

SPACESTATION REZ – REZ RAKER

The final chapter to this epic Gex game takes place in space. Head to the launch room at the far end of Funky town. Here you'll find a Rez TV. Enter it and you'll launch into space. Now you'll be able to dock at Rez's space station...





Mission Objective

- **Turn off the three generators to open the space station airlock.**

How?

Hop over the various satellites toward the giant space station. You'll find yourself on a large array of solar panels. At the end you'll see a small power room. Go in (avoid the ray of light) and whip the switch. Now head over the panels toward the main module and take the lift up.

Up here you'll find the locked entrance and several fire cannons (fire in space?). Now you must go down to the other two large solar arrays and hit the switches inside the power pods. This should unlock the entrance to the module allowing you to go in and face your arch enemy Rez...

BATTLE WITH REZ

This is it, finally you face Rez inside his elaborate space station. You'll see him in a central position and you'll be on a platform (one of three) with a fire bug TV by your side.

Mission Objective

- **Destroy agent Rez and save Agent Xtra.**

How?

Rez has a target on his chest. Use the fire bug to hit this target (you'll only get one shot before a shield goes down) then run down towards him. Run around him and jump his arm attacks. Then the three platforms will appear again. Hop on to one and use a fire bug. Repeat until Rez's energy is depleted and he dies.

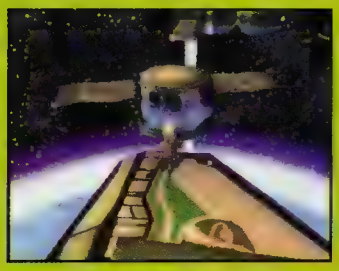
ALFRED'S GAME TIPS

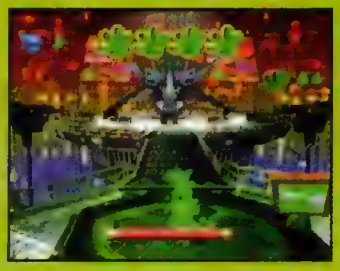
Alfred says... Only take the one shot at Rez, he fires powerful missiles, Sir. You must keep moving.

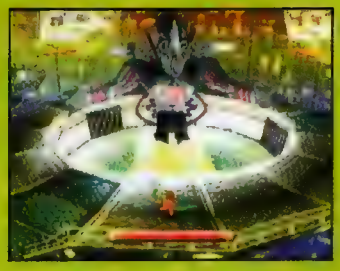
GEX'S HEALTH TIPS

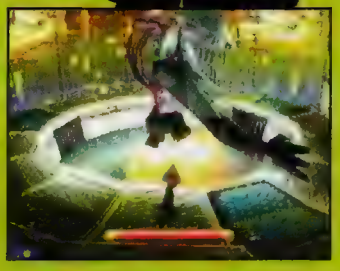
Gex says... Watch out for the crumbling catwalks. They fall away beneath your feet. Also avoid falling into Rez's pit, it'll peal my scales for good!

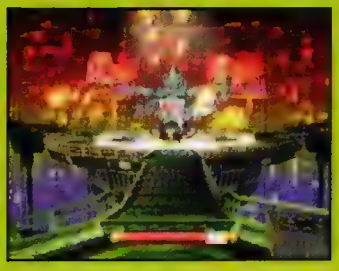
THE FINAL FIGHT

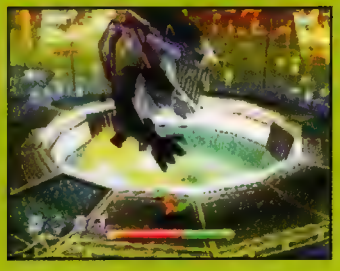


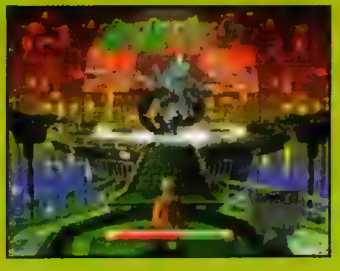












Congratulations, you've beaten Rez and saved the beautiful Agent Xtra. Now sit back and enjoy some cool FMV.

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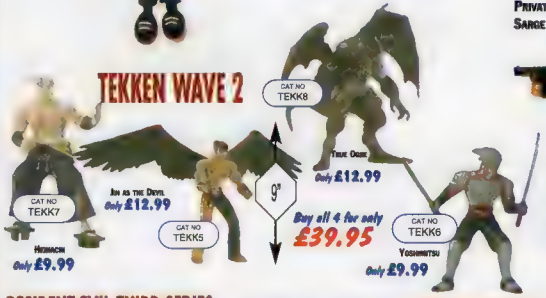

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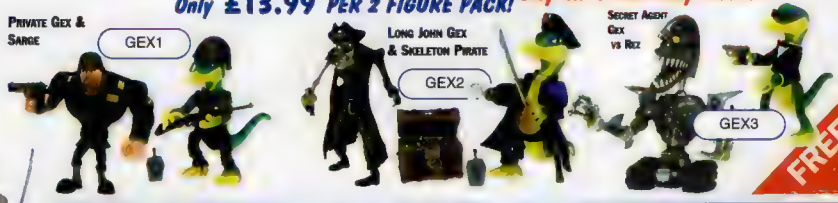

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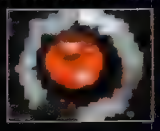
R-TYPE DELTA

Regular readers will have come across this game many times in past issues of these pages. We've raved about it, we've waited for it and we've finally played and rated it. Now, there's just one thing left. We're going to show you how to do it, because like most good shoot 'em-ups, it's hard as granite and forgiving as Satan.

CHEATS

To use these cheats you must first collect a force pod.

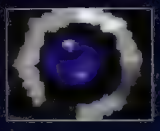


Full Dose

Pause the game, hold L2 and press: ←→↑↓→←↑↓●

Red Power Up

Pause the game, hold L2 and press: ←→↑↓→←↑↓●



Blue Power Up

Pause the game, hold L2 and press: ←→↑↓→←↑↓●

Yellow Power Up

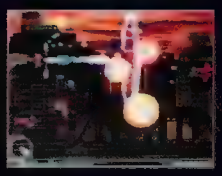
Pause the game, hold L2 and press: ←→↑↓→←↑↓●

Up The Arsenal

A shoot 'em-up wouldn't be right without a plethora of power-ups and R-Type Delta isn't any different.

Beam Me Up

As well as the basic weapon you have the ability to charge up a more powerful blast. By holding ● the bar at the bottom of the screen fills up, release ● to fire off a large charge of energy. Furthermore, by holding ● even longer you can double charge for an even larger attack.



Use The Force

The Force is a pod which can be attached to either the rear or front of your craft giving you both protection and extra firepower. You can also release the Force and send it into dangerous areas to attack from safety. The pod has the ability to damage enemies and objects by merely touching them, which is very useful against larger craft. When released, the Force also fires when you do and, depending on your craft, will fire in multiple directions.

The Three Colours

Your pod can be powered-up with any of three colour coded types; Red, Blue and Yellow. Each colour provides different styles of attack and are also dependent on the craft chosen.

Delta Bombed

The Force can be dosed up and allow you to unleash a powerful smart bomb called the Delta bomb. To dose up, absorb enemy fire with your pod or destroy foes by launching your pod into them. Once at 100% just press ▲ to waste a whole screen full of nasties.

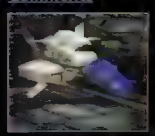
Speed Freak

Your craft has four speeds numbered one to four with one being the slowest and four the highest speed. Go up a speed by pressing R1 and down by pressing L1.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Initially you have a choice of three craft, and a hidden fourth craft is released later. Each craft has different abilities and weapons, to choose the right one for you check out the showroom...

CRAFT R9
FORCE DEVICE Standard Type
CANNON Shockwave Cannon
Comments

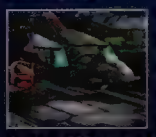


The original R-Type, if you've played the original then you'll know what's in store here. When detached the force fires the same rounds as R9. Initially it's only a single stream but you get diagonal and vertical fire as the level is built up. The R9 rates as the best craft of the initial three choices.

CRAFT RX
FORCE DEVICE Tentacle Type
CANNON Burst Shockwave Cannon
Comments

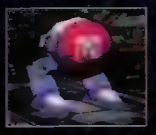
A slightly fatter craft than the R9 but no less manoeuvrable. The tentacle Force has a homing ability and will target enemies independent of your instructions. When detached the pod fires standard rounds at the nearest foe and as its level increases, so does the number of streams. The RX is only just beaten by R9 in the best craft stakes.

CRAFT R13
FORCE DEVICE Anchor Type
CANNON Lightning Shockwave Cannon
Comments

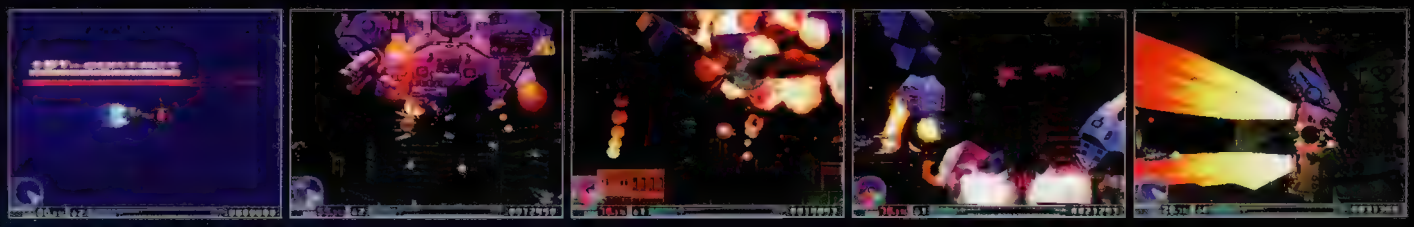


Another craft with another Force device. The Pod doesn't fire when detached but remains linked to your craft by an 'energy wire' which damages enemies when they touch it. The R13 is probably the weakest of the four craft.

CRAFT Power Armour
FORCE DEVICE Bydo Type
Comments



The Power Armour is one of the power-up wielding craft found within the game and is very similar to the R9 craft in terms of weaponry. This is definitely the best craft in the game and has the most impressive Delta bomb to go with it. To get this craft, however, you have to complete the game on either the Normal or Hard difficulty settings.



LEVEL GUIDE

FIRST CONTACT - LETHAL WEAPON

A local destruction weapon, which was installed inside an orbiting space fortress, fell to earth for unknown reasons. Control of the weapon has been lost and it's about to destroy the city.

Gun Robot

The first and easiest sub-boss to defeat. Release your Force and keep low to avoid the robot's laser beam. Fire continuously and he's scrap metal in no time.

Gunship

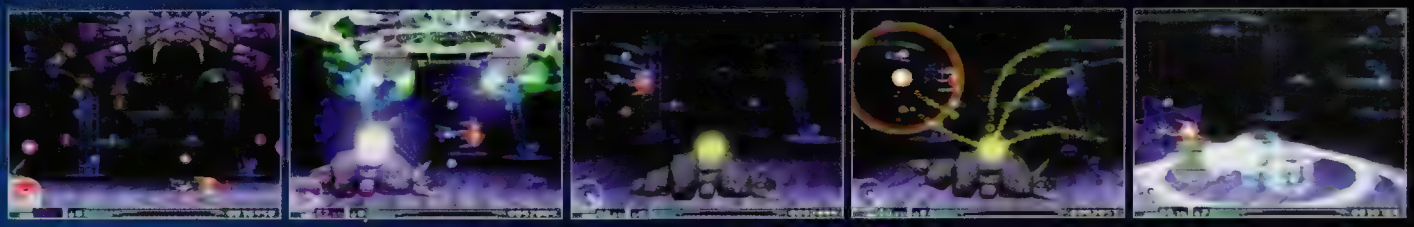
This ship creeps up from behind so beware. Keep the Force on the front and get underneath and behind the ship as soon as you can. Release the pod so that it gets trapped underneath the ship. Watch out for the two turrets on the top whilst your Force does its job.

Contright

A tricky customer if you don't know which angle he's coming from. To begin with stay to the right and let him pass behind you. Collect the Yellow power-up as this is one of the rare times it's useful. Keep your Force attached and concentrate on the large purple section of the snake as this is the weak point. Watch out when he curls up, get in the centre and push your force into his body. You'll either destroy him or he'll make a run for it.

Tank

Very soon after the snake you'll face the end of level boss. Keep to the left of the screen and half way up to avoid the engine blasts, fire off the pod into the centre and fire like mad. When the tank turns round, move downwards and aim at the purple weak point whilst keeping away from the laser beam. Recall your Force to protect you from the plasma balls then go for the weak point until the boss is destroyed.

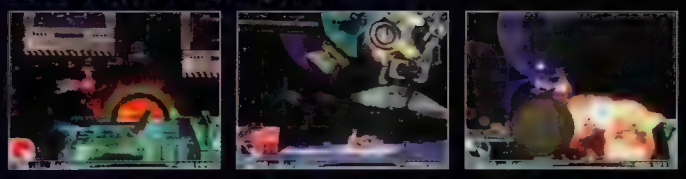


SECOND CONTACT - DEFORMATION

Due to the Bydo attack a reactor has been submersed and has fallen into a nest of strange creatures. There's a large number of aquatic beings to battle in order to get closer to the Bydo forces.

Slug Ship

This boss is in two sections; a ship at the top of the screen and a large slug at the bottom. By far the easiest way to take on the boss is to save up your Delta Bomb and use it when both the ship and slug are on-screen. This will destroy the ship straight away, leaving just the slug to deal with. The slug fires four projectiles which leave a trail of pods for you to avoid. When the slug is on the right keep your Force attached to the front of your craft and when it's to the left have the Force on your rear. Stay at the bottom and aim at the dome on the top of the slug. This guy isn't that strong so he won't take long to kill off.



THIRD CONTACT - GIGANTIC ATTACK

A weapons factory in central Asia was attacked and destroyed by Bydo, the weapons devised by the humans for protection now threaten their makers. This thing was designed for hard battles and it'll take one to win through.

Section One - The Head

The head is equipped with a large gun, attach the Force to the rear of your craft and stay to the right of the screen. Get in line with the gun and fire your pod at it. Retire to the bottom of the screen and avoid the boss' fire. Your pod should take out the gun for you. Watch out for the various enemies appearing from the front and whatever you do, don't pick up the Yellow power-up 'cos it's crap for this level!

Section Two - Between the Legs

As the boss gains ground switch to speed four and nip under the foot as it moves forward, you only get two opportunities to do so. Once under, take out the exhaust port just behind the leg. A laser turret now appears. This only fires when you pass below it, so stay in front of it. Have your Force attached to your rear. When the laser turret moves to the left nip up and take it out, make sure you keep ahead of it throughout.

Section Three - Rear End

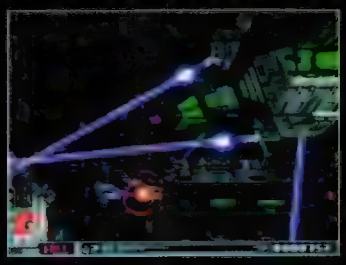
Nip under the hind foot in the same way as before. Once you get behind the boss watch out for the missiles falling from above. Get the Bit power-up as soon as you can for better protection. Once above the boss, move to the right and get under the shelter, also move your Force to the rear to take out the incoming ships.

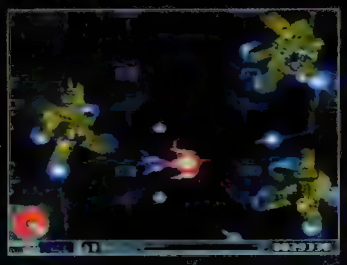
Section Four - Back

On the back of the boss is another gun turret, although this one fires out satellites at you. The satellites spin round, firing bolts so take them out quickly. Concentrate your fire on the turrets, destroy these and you'll face the final target.

Section Five - Reflector Laser

The generator at the bottom fires lasers which are reflected towards you. Prior to firing you will get a dim red laser, this allows you to avoid the laser when it does fire. Take out the reflector to start with. If you have a full dose then use the Delta bomb. Once the reflector has gone, target the generator. If you pass through the red laser a massive beam will be fired so get clear if this happens.





FOURTH CONTACT - INVASION

A space fortress which has been overrun by the Bydo forces. You have to battle to save the remaining front line of defence Earth has.

Gun Ships

In the early stages of the level you face a number of gun ships. The ships are equipped with lasers, and these release a harmless beam just before shooting so get out of the way before they fire for real. Take out the guns then target the main body of the ship.

Missile Bots

These yellow painted foe attack in numbers and fire loads of homing missiles. Take them out as soon as you can, as things can get hairy with six or more attacking at once!

Laser Bots

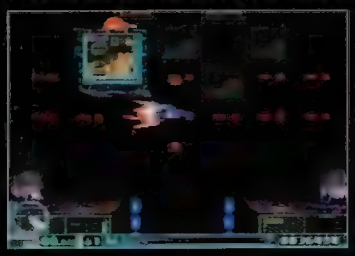
Looking exactly the same as the Missile Bots but in a fetching blue colour. These guys fire out a laser which can pass through your pod. Your best bet is to kill them before they get chance to shoot.

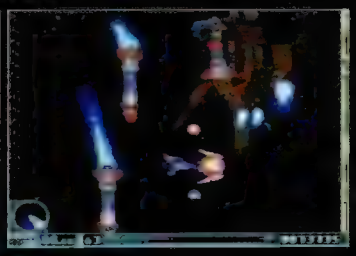
Moving Platforms

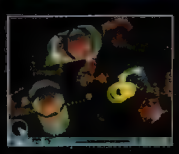
As if avoiding bullets wasn't bad enough, now you have to contend with platforms moving in from the background. Use the Delta bomb if it gets too crowded. Sticking to the right hand side of the screens gives the 'easiest' route through the carnage. Keep moving the Force from front to back to enable you to fire at the attacking Bots. Also get hold of the Yellow power-up as this works surprisingly well in the confined spaces.

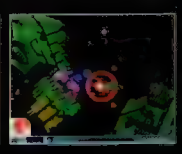
Mining Ship

After a tough level, this ship is surprisingly easy to beat. Pick up any of the power-ups floating around just before you meet the boss. The ship takes off and flies in circles around you, soon after, he launches great big missiles which come down the screen at you. Keep moving back and forth, firing continuously, to avoid and destroy the missiles. The ship stops on the right of the screen giving you chance to pile in. If you have full dose then let rip to finish him off.









FIFTH CONTACT - EVIL

After the success in the space fortress the pilots lose their way when returning. Bydo has invaded their minds and trapped them in an illusion of space.

The pilots recognise the enemies involved, although they appear more powerful than before.

Brain Jars

The jars float about bouncing off each other causing all sorts of mayhem. The only way to get rid of these glass encased pests is to shoot the brain through the broken sections of the jar.

Clawed Worms

A segmented enemy with a nasty claw equipped head. Destroy the head and the body breaks up and floats across the screen. If you destroy one of the body segments then you have two worms to deal with. The best bet is to take out the head and dodge the body parts.

Broken Pipes

Around about the halfway point in the level you find yourself surrounded by a load of rotating pipes. This is a very hard section to get through! Firstly kill the red parasites clinging to the pipes to make the job a little easier, second you need to position your craft to avoid the pipes. Check out this lot and you'll be straight through no problems...

1. Stay back and shoot the floating objects; 2. Dart through when the gap widens.

3. After a short while you meet this. Again stay back and wait...; 4. ...then zip through (use speed four) and up to the top.

5. Keep to the bottom left then follow the first pipe as it rotates. Watch out for two waves of dead objects that float in from all angles.

6. Get the pod on the back, move forward and kill the parasites. Quickly get back to avoid being crushed, then you can move back to safety as the pipes pass by.

Rather than just one boss to finish the level you have three to defeat! Each one is a throw back to the original R-Type and you have to defeat them all in one go!

Ring Boss

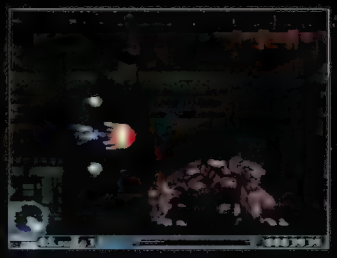
This boss consists of a ring of circular guns and a weak point. When the boss arrives stay at the bottom of the screen and move forward as it passes. Carefully avoid the dead bodies falling down the screen and wait for the boss to activate. Get inside the ring and quickly destroy the guns, watching out for their fire. Shoot the weak point and the whole lot falls apart.

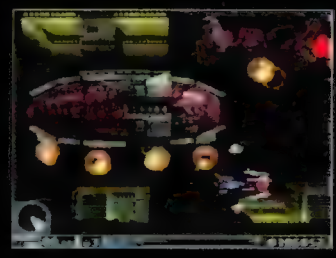
Snake Boss

Soon after the next boss appears. You have two indestructible snakes floating about with a main alien body in support. You have to avoid the snakes while shooting the main alien, this isn't easy as the alien moves in and out of the background and you can only hit it when it's in line with you. Destroy the main body to move on.

Warship

Stay in the top right screen to avoid the initial laser beam and get your pod on your rear end. Take out the gun turrets ASAP then head down to the bottom of the screen. Move back and through the gap to the top as the ship breaks up. Again go for the turrets then turn your attention to the unit spitting blue plasma balls. Keep avoiding the ship and taking out the rest of the turrets, eventually the ship moves away and the level is finished.





SIXTH CONTACT - AWAKENING

The pilots try hard to rid themselves of the Bydo forces in their bodies, and start to return to reality. Hope still remains.

Alien Beast

A skinless dog with the ability to walk on the ceiling as well as the floor. He delivers plasma balls from his back which can pass through your armour, that along with being down right tough makes these guys hard to beat. Send in your Force and use the Delta bomb if you can.

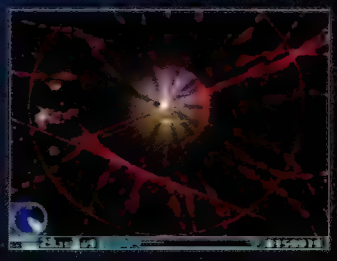
Thing

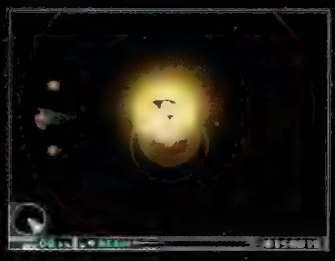
There's no best way to describe this beastie other than as an airship shaped 'thing'. This is quite clearly the hardest part of the game so far, so expect to do this bit more than once!

Along its base is a number of openings which spill out the same plasma balls as the dogs, so this is a no-go area. Stay above the Thing, until the Alien Dog appears and you can see the rear of the Thing, then let rip with the Delta bomb. If the Thing doesn't snuff it then get behind and finish him off.

R-Types

Just before meeting the final boss of the level you have to defeat three R-Type craft. A fairly simple affair, just avoid the lasers they fire and shoot like crazy. Don't waste a Delta bomb here, you'll need it shortly. Also don't charge up as they'll just do the same counter-acting the attack.





LAST CONTACT - LIFE

A different dimension sucks in the R craft and inside they come into contact with the with the final enemy – 'Bydo Core'. It's time to end it all, forever.

Bydo Core

The Bydo Core appears a couple of times throughout the level but doesn't cause any problems until the end. The boss is basically a black ball surrounded by a larger protective ball. The boss will fire bright white eggs which can be easily avoided. During this stage lay into the boss to destroy his protective layer. The tadpoles inside will escape but they don't need to be avoided.

Alien Boss

This is it, the toughest, most challenging boss of the game, the chief alien and one hard son of a beech! Before he appears charge up your beam then let rip into his gut.

The first major danger is his tail, keep central and attack the weak point in his belly. The small creatures coming from his mouth are very hard to avoid, if you shoot them they split up into smaller creatures, if you don't shoot them they split up anyway! Stay down-screen and move up when the creatures split up, they'll tend to head to where you were. Also use the Delta bomb, this doesn't kill the smaller creatures but does give you more time to avoid them.

After some battering, a monster bursts from the alien's stomach. The monster itself isn't a threat, but it does launch a blue worm-like plasma. Get in the middle of this and push your Force into it. When you can, get out of it and go round and up to the top, again if you've recharged your Delta bomb then use it. Keep hitting the monster and watch out for the plasma breaking up. It doesn't take that many hits for the monster to die, when he does it's another level complete.

Once the black ball is exposed it will steal your Force and absorb it, and there's nothing you can do about this. Soon after you get the tadpoles coming back at you, all you have to do is survive the onslaught until your pod charges to full dose. Once at max, let rip, wipe out the boss and get comfy for the end sequence.

Escape to Victory

At the end of the game you get the expected end sequence. The content of the ending depends on which craft you complete the game with, here's a selection of endings just for those who don't make it through... S

When The Lights Go Out

It's the scenario every gamer dreads: how to keep ennui at bay without electricity. Here's a few ideas for you.

What with all the privatisation and resultant cost-cutting going on in our once-proud electricity generating industry, it's only a matter of time before we start becoming subject to sudden and unexpected powercuts, plunging our voltage-dependant homes into darkness. Of course, the very worst aspect of this is that no matter how hard you try to persuade it, your PlayStation will not work, and at times like these there's only one thing for it: break out the candles and the board games to try and eke some entertainment out of this back-to-the-Stone-Age situation. As ever, we your friends at STATION want to make such an emergency as painless as possible, and thus last evening we simulated just such an occurrence and road tested the cream of the crop, including some old favourites that appeal to sad and nostalgic twentysomethings such as ourselves and a couple of ker-razy new home entertainment type things.

BOARD STOOPID

After a few (or in Kendall's case many) medicinal pints of lager at the local bevvy house we all retired to Dazza's salubrious pad, suitably drenched by a typical, yet unexpected, Exeter monsoon and well ready for some cardboard-based fun. As anyone who's experienced a Christmas morning will attest, though, you can't just pop a game out of its shrinkwrapping and get stuck in. It takes a serious period of construction to prepare the field of play, and with ten shiny new ones to get to grips with it was more like an episode of *The Generation Game* for a while.

Ant dived headfirst into creating the Mousetrap, and with the assistance of Christian's girlfriend Becky took a mere three-quarters of an hour to build the complex plastic edifice, only to then discover that the aim is to build it as the game progresses, causing much wailing and gnashing of teeth. Surprisingly the two-piece Connect 4 caused problems as well, as the flap piece that held the discs in appeared to be missing, although none of us had counted on MB changing the decades-old design of the component into something we thought was part of Buckaroo. Soon though, all the pieces were more or less in place and to the sophisticated strains of the new Nightmare on Wax album (on battery-powered stereo, of course) we organised teams for our first foray. The question of making things interesting by playing for cash cropped up but was met with a wail of claimed penury from the more prudent members of the STATION team, so we decided to play for the glory alone. **First up: the spiky marbled tension of Ker-Plunk.**

KER-PLUNK

MADE BY: MB Games PRICE: £12.95

The stylish blue perspex tower is almost a design classic, especially as its midriff has been enlarged for the new millennium. Preparation is difficult, thanks to the fiddly straws having to be pushed through dozens of holes, but once the game is underway it's worth the chore. Genuine skill and strategic aptitude pay dividends, and for creation of tense anticipation this is the clear winner.

GRAPHICS: 93
A joy to behold. Evocative of art deco crossed with drinking beakers.

SOUND: 54
The creak of straws and the eventual crash of marbles are the only sounds.

PLAYABILITY: 94
Simple yet effective, a combination of instinct and calculation is required.

"HIGH DRAMA AND LOW TACTICS COMBINE IN A BONA-FIDE OLD-SCHOOL CLASSIC."

95

WE'VE LOST OUR MARBLES

Four teams of two squared up against one another in the augmented version of this long time favourite game, boosted by the addition of twice as many marbles and straws from another older version. This had the effect of vastly increasing the pressure on the supporting struts, making every move a potential kamikaze disaster. New boy on the block Matt's daring backhand technique drew gasps of approval from the gathered throng, while Nick contemplated his every move like Kasparov before withdrawing the straw with a Zorro-like flourish. Rotating the tower from player to player proved almost as risky as the retracting, not least because the candles we had lit for maximum authenticity tended add an unexpected risk of house fire to every move. All became quiet as the odds lengthened, only for Becky to pull the wrong straw and trigger an avalanche of marbles that conclusively ended the game as the column became inextricably blocked with glass balls. A little light relief was in order after this we felt. **Enter the Butt-Head.**

BUTT-HEAD

MADE BY: Wanted Ltd **PRICE:** £9.99

As you are probably aware already, EVERYONE looks a twat in these hats, while the ridiculous nutting motions you have to use compound the hilarity even further. The enjoyment is a touch short-lived maybe, but heady while it lasts.

GRAPHICS: 96
A mirth-heavy visual treat for those observing.

SOUND: 25
The only aural element is the delicate rip of Velcro and the recriminations of others.

PLAYABILITY: 80
Needs a fair degree of skill and/or co-operation to get the most out of it.

"THE MOST SUITABLE GAME HERE FOR AVOWED INEBRIATES."

85

NO BUTTS, YOU'RE PLAYING

Comedy headgear is always a guaranteed source of entertainment, while ball games are a mainstay of civilised man's leisure time, so the pedigree of Butt-Head should be without question as a way to pass the time. The basic requirements of this game are that: A) One or both of the players must be intoxicated and B) Everyone else in eyeshot must laugh at the sheer ridiculousness of the Velcro-striped headgear you have to don to take part. Three soft balls are thrown at the bonce of your counterpart with the intention being to stick them to the Velcro and score points depending on the relative difficulty, with the highest score awarded for the back and sides of the cranium. Darren seemed not to grasp this rule and tried to actively dodge the ball, a situation made worse by the inability of the tight skullcaps to fit over his bulbous dreadlocks. 'We should grease ourselves up and swim the channel' was his only constructive comment as the inaccurate balls flew past, risking sudden immolation from the greasy flame of our Pound Shop candles. Very much a game of silly buggers this one. **Anyone for Connect 4?**

CONNECT 4

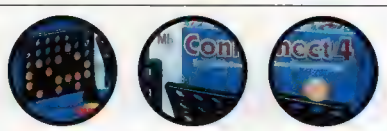
MADE BY: MB Games **PRICE:** £10.95

A Vulcan-like logical approach and raw animal cunning come good in this timeless head-stretcher, but surely it's about time for Connect 5 now, MB?

GRAPHICS: 70
The clean lines and geometrical harmony of the board are pleasing.

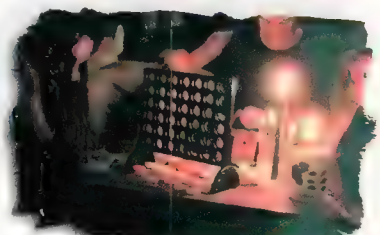
SOUND: 72
The gentle swish sound of discs dropping into slots is strangely therapeutic.

PLAYABILITY: 88
May ultimately prove too hard to lose, if you see what I mean.



"A USEFUL WAY TO EXERCISE OFT-NEGLECTED BRAIN MUSCLES."

90



GONNA GET MYSELF CONNECTED

The elegantly simple concept of stacking four coloured discs in a line has kept Connect 4 on the shelves for many, many moons, so would it live up to our recollections or prove to be no more than elaborate noughts and crosses? Two teams of four were assembled in an effort to create some kind of Borg-styled group mind effort and a heavy atmosphere of ponderance descended as brows were heavily furrowed. During the course of play the team consisting of Nick, Kendall, Matt and Dazza indeed began to stroke their chins simultaneously, not that it did them any good as their opponents calmly anticipated and blocked their every move before moving in for the inevitable kill, in spite of Daz suddenly exclaiming 'We've won!' before noticing it was actually just another row of three. A straightforward yet classic concept that stretches the grey matter just enough. **Operation time!**

OPERATION

MADE BY: MB Games PRICE: £10.95

Although not based upon that classic of pre-pubescent activities, Doctors and Nurses, removing unlikely objects from the prone body of a man with a big red nose remains wonderfully endearing.

GRAPHICS: 75
The expression on the patient's face urges you on further to save his health.

SOUND: 95
The raucous buzzer breaks the silence like the horns of Jericho sounding.

PLAYABILITY: 81
A rock-like hand is demanded, excluding the shakier among us.

"CHEAP YET CHEERFUL, AND A WELLSPRING OF GIDDYING FRUSTRATION."

82

RED NOSE DAY

Whilst major internal surgery isn't often a source of hilarity the exception to the rule is Operation, the battery powered doctor sim to rule them all. After being appaled at the cheapness of the components we all snapped on our rubber gloves and facemasks for a spot of electrified scalpel work. The surprisingly steady hands of Darren reaped early rewards, plucking out the stylised body bits with arrogant ease, but the eagle eyes of Matt soon turned the tables back in his favour, the tricky Breadbasket and Wishbone pieces proving to be pivotal turning points. The sudden jolt of the buzzer was enough to make Ant jump like a girl the first time it rang, while Christian's abject failure to win any money at all soured the game irreparably in his eyes. In the end it was victory to Matt, with more body parts in his kitty than Geoffrey Dahmer.

It's time to twist the night away...

TWISTER

MADE BY: MB Games PRICE: £12.95

The big slippery plastic sheet is the spotted symbol of all that is ungainly and ice-breaking, and the simple intertwining of incompatible human bodies has an almost infinite variety of humorous possibilities. The only problem was keeping the sheet flat and judging who was cheating amidst a mass of gangling limbs.

GRAPHICS: 97
The pictures speak for themselves, I trust.

SOUND: 95
Screams of discomfort and promises of revenge form the soundtrack.

PLAYABILITY: 97
You just can't go wrong, unless you have an intermittent back problem.

"THEY'LL BE PLAYING TWISTER AT THE NEXT MILLENNIUM PARTY, I SHOULD IMAGINE."

96

YOU'RE TWISTING MY MELON, MAN

The beatnik cool of David Holmes' mix CD kicks in as we gear ourselves up for the mainstay of drunken student parties, Twister. While STATION is a tight-knit force, the prospect of playing the mythical naked baby oil version filled us with trepidation, so the only apparel to be removed was shoes. Beginning with six people as opposed to the recommended four was a brash idea with hindsight, and a mere two rounds saw the early demise of both Christian and Darren (who stayed in for longer than he should, claiming he thought it was within the rules to rest his knees). After a pain-barrier testing showing from Ant the field was down to supple ex-ballerina Becky and the more angular frame of Nick, for whom a vertical derivative of the lotus position proved too much. Twister still ruled the 'hood as far as embarrassing physical games were concerned. **Now saddle up and move out!**

BUCKAROO

MADE BY: MB Games PRICE: £12.95

The world's most uncooperative pack-animal is still with us. Perhaps it's time to put it to sleep.

GRAPHICS: 47
The nag is extremely unattractive to look at, in spite of the stick-on eyes.

SOUND: 20
Except for the straining of the elastic bands, not a peep.

PLAYABILITY: 40
Not as good as Jaws. Now there was a tension-filled object removal game...

"LEAVE IT FOR THE KIDDIES, QUITE FRANKLY."

30

BUCK OFF

Again, Ant meticulously constructed the primary coloured mule and piled all of its load on, only to realise the aim of the game was to take turns to do so. Gallantly we again chose teams and attached the lasso, stetson, shovel and so forth until there were no more, forcing us to start stacking Connect 4 pieces on top. Eventually we came to the consensus that the mule was never going to buck, and then tried to manually activate the mechanism. Indeed, even firm pushes wouldn't get the nag kicking, and it took a swung fist to finally get it to work. Murmurs of disappointment signalled what the general opinion was, and the game was shoved unceremoniously onto the floor. **Next!**

MOUSE TRAP

MADE BY: MB Games **PRICE:** £16.99

Time has not been kind this ex-leader in the gimmick field. Although it pioneered the humane removal of rodents, it should now be avoided like smelly cheese.

GRAPHICS: 60
Plasticky as heck, but it does have an unusual form.

SOUND: 50
The clunk of the marble and the thunk of the diver landing in his pot...

PLAYABILITY: 10
A boring main game with a disappointing climax.

"ONE FOR STUPID KIDS WHO CAN'T HANDLE BOGGLE."

20

MOUSE CRAP

The night is wearing on, Wotsits have been eaten, the candles burn lower in a very *Wuthering Heights* manner. Mousetrap has been left to almost last, thanks to its less than glowing reputation amongst fifty percent of those present, but finally the rickety plastic contraption that is the game board is up on the table. However the prospect of dismantling the whole damn thing so we can put it back together by playing what's essentially an elaborate clone of Ludo proved too much for Christian, and after a few test runs of the frankly underwhelming trap sequence he slammed the board shut, wrecking most of the components and summarily ending the game. And good riddance too. **Dracula or Devil Priest?**

HORROR TOP-TRUMP CARDS

MADE BY: Waddingtons **PRICE:** £Who Knows?

The final game was stumbled upon by accident, hidden away amongst other childish memorabilia. Like most of the other games it has sat the test of time and passed with merit.

GRAPHICS: 96
The superb pictures on the cards have no equal in all art.

SOUND: 30
The mantra-like repetition of stats is oddly hypnotic, I suppose.

PLAYABILITY: 70
The purely random factor has too large a part to play, arguably.

"GIRLS STARE BLANKLY, BOYS LOVE IT TO BITS. STILL A DESIGN CLASSIC, THOUGH."

75

FEAR IS THE KEY

All the boxed games lie scattered and shambolic at our feet, discarded like unwanted children. Ant has miraculously discovered a pack of Horror Top Trumps from his attic, the perennial playtime timewaster for a legion of current twentysomethings.

The girls in the group remain decidedly nonplussed at the sudden burst of male-orientated nostalgia upon seeing for the first time in nearly two decades the likes of Dr Syn, The Living Skull, Venusian Death Cell and the rest of the grisly gang. We shuffle and deal the pack into two and launch into a gore-based duel of Horror Ratings, Fear Factors and Physical Strength, dominated as ever by the trump card of Death.

Pretty soon, though, we glean that maybe we can't remember the rules and are getting precisely nowhere, so it's decided to forego a strict turn-based system to speed up the flow of cards, but again we fail to get any nearer to victory. Calling it quits seems like the best idea, although as it turns out we were yet again playing the rules incorrectly and should've used multiple players. Damn!

So that was it, the toy cupboard was finally bare. The general consensus favoured long-standing favourites Ker-Plunk and Twister as the pick of the bunch, particularly as they were amongst the cheaper games (and both could be used as art objects after play, the Twister board as an oversized Damien Hirst poster and Ker-Plunk as a piece of porcupine-like modern art). As the candles were snuffed and electricity returned to our lives the strange thing was we couldn't think of what PlayStation game we should play next.

Many thanks to Kate at Hasbro Interactive for making just about all of the above possible.

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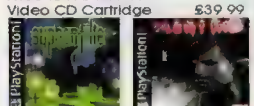

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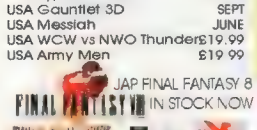

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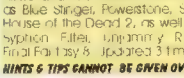

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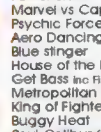

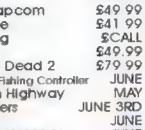

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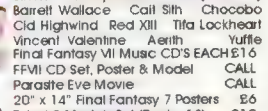

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Reaction

Your monthly handle on the changing face of PlayStation gaming

News Index: Lucozade Lara – Stamp out games – Square take a left into new direction [page 100] Dreamcast snaps up top titles – Um Jammer delayed – Nippon News [page 101] Tekken Tag – TOCA Trainer – USA Today [page 102] Metal Gear 1.5 – Retro Hasbro [page 103] SF rollercoaster – Planet of the Apes game due [page 104] Dreamcast launch planned [page 105]

Lara Fizzibly Selling Out

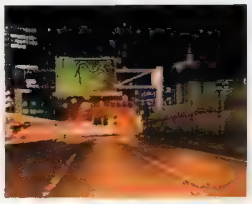
The Croft franchise expands into the world of product association.

Lara Croft: suave, debonair, D-cupped and rich beyond the dreams of avarice. Not only is she currently reaping royalties from the extensive sales of both games and merchandise, Lara has now made a media whore of herself in advertising. Cue images of tossers in Armani suits snorting lines of Charlie in exclusive Soho establishments. Lara wants you to drink Lucozade, gallons of it; so much that the energy rush causes you to collapse and make gibbering sounds reminiscent of your catatonic grandmother.

The Lucozade commercial itself shows Lara in action, running through labyrinthine tunnels pursued by slavering dogs. Her energy indicator drops as she reaches a ravine. Contradicting evidence from all the *Tomb Raider* games, Lara produces a bottle of Lucozade from her rucksack and necks it, increasing her energy and allowing her to emancipate herself from her plight, Bond-style. Why not Dr Pepper, Lara? It's far nicer...

Racing Ahead

While we were expecting huge RPGs in interactive environments, it seems Squaresoft has taken a new tack for PlayStation 2.

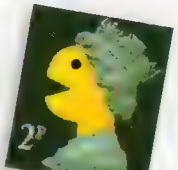


The future is creeping inexorably toward us in the form of the PlayStation 2. Games are now in development, with many esteemed companies having received development kits for the console. Eyes will be fixed more firmly on some companies than others; Squaresoft being one such example. With the potential of the PlayStation 2 and Square's creative flair, it can produce genre-defining titles, the likes of which we meagre humans have never even conceived. Which is why Square is working on a racing game. Oh dear.

As you can surmise from these conceptual pictures, however, the game should be a symbiosis of awe-inspiring visuals and ultra-realistic car physics. The appearance of this title is unlikely on these shores for at least 18 months, so keep on dreaming.

Stamp Out The Queen

Was it monetarism or glasnost? How does the US remember the '80s?



Much as we love to court controversy at STATION, this is not republican propaganda. It's a nice, sweet, soothing piece of anodyne news. The United States Postal Service recently ran a poll for ideas to implement into commemorative stamps for the '80s. Straying away from mullet hairstyles and ad-men snorting lines of nose-candy, the Americans have voted for a videogames stamp – which is curious when you recall that games were socially reviled and the sole preserve of nerds in '80s America. Need I mention the vile *Wargames* as evidence?

Still, America enjoys re-inventing its history, so the videogame stamp is in, along with *The Cosby Show* and *ET*. Hmm.

Brand New

CASTROL HONDA SUPERBIKES

PUBLISHER: TBC RELEASE: Autumn

While four-wheeled action is never a stranger to the PlayStation, the motorbike is treated very much as a cousin as far as the racing game sports is concerned, with only slim likes Colin McRae and Moto Racer venturing here and there in meagre portions scattered few and far between. There ever opportunities exist at THQ look set to remedy the imbalance though with this game and the assistance of the realistic Castrol Honda Racing team. Street manners rather than streets seem to be the order of the day, and with up to twenty-three other racers on track you can remember those classic Mad Sunday pile ups so beloved of the Isle of Man TT. Our advice would be to polish those leathers, get yourself a new tattoo and possibly grow a beard to kill time until its release.

iNFO STATION

FORMULA 1 '99 AND A FLAKE, PLEASE

The latest news update on Psygnosis' F1 '99 promises 'fresh vehicle dynamics and handling, ultra-realistic crashes, advanced engine sound effects and intricate AI', which one assumes will rectify the howling programming gaffes that made *F1 '98* such a laughing stock.

ODDULOUS?

Oddworld Productions has let slip that it is planning a god-type game based around the inimitable Abe universe. Hand of Odd will be a PlayStation 2 title concerned with taking on a particular deitypical ideology. The regular cast of Mudukons, Sligs and Glukkons feature.

PLAY IT AGAIN, SAMURAI

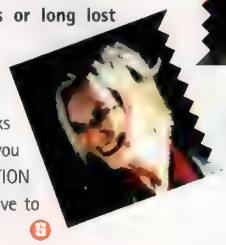
Coming via Capcom and accordingly promising *Resident Evil*-style gameplay, Onimusha: Demon Warrior is an arcade adventure set in civil war era Japan. Pencilled in to arrive sometime in the year 2000, it involves rescue and the trap-infested walls of a forbidding castle.

Um Jammer Latey

Delay plagues PaRappa follow-up.

Rhythm action fans will be disappointed to hear that Um Jammer Lammy has been delayed until the distant month of September due to 'a timing issue', though whether this refers to a technical problem or the date of the game's release is ambiguous. What is certain, however, is that Sony will not allow the marketing errors that let the original *PaRappa* sell in such low quantities to be repeated.

SEPARATED AT BIRTH?



Somehow the great gene pool of life occasionally spits out two creatures so similar they should be twins or long lost cousins, although remain curiously unrelated.

This months doppelgängers are Jo Whiley – friend of the stars, sultry DJ, fan of the Manics and all round media whore – and that bird out of *Silent Hill*, who looks so eerie that you'd probably run a mile from her before you even gave her a peck on the cheek. Not that the STATION boys fancy game characters of course, but we did have to clean Nick's screen after he had played *Parasite Eve*.

Get Orf Moi Laaaaand

There's danger on the high seas of videogame licensing, as Sega score several points for stealing big names.

The Dreamcast may be finally amassing itself some repute and kudos with the announcement of some hotly anticipated titles appearing on the machine. This may seem like a superfluous morsel of information, yet it directly affects you, dear reader. For the Dreamcast is like a fox, full of vulpine cunning, poaching potential PlayStation titles for its own capital gains. Prepare to mourn, wail and gnash teeth as we reveal to you that the PlayStation will not be seeing either Soul Caliber (Soul Blade 2) or Dead or Alive 2. No more bouncing bahoomas...

These games already look stunning in their Dreamcast incarnation, yet surely the PlayStation has enough power to handle a competent engine of these games? Namco, what perverse act is this? Why do you toy with our souls? Fear not, for there is redemption of sorts. Both titles will certainly appear on PlayStation 2 leaving us with only the vacuum of waiting and the agony therein.

NEWS NIPPON

ALL THE LATEST NEWS FROM WAY OUT EAST

FAILING TO DELIVER

All is not sweetness and light in the world of Dreamcast. Japanese videogame sales figures are showing a trend that does not bode well for Sega's latest, and only, hope. Games predicted to perform exceptionally are sitting at fairly unimpressive places in the charts, with House Of The Dead 2 and Get Bass especially dragging their heels. Namco Japan, however, is looking to invigorate the scene with prospected sales of 2 million for Soul Caliber, the gorgeous sequel to Soul Blade. As the response to the Dreamcast in Japan will directly influence the European marketing of the console, we'll keep you informed of any significant trends and changes.

LEGO ROCK RAIDERS

PUBLISHER: LEGO MEDIA RELEASE: October

The smartlooking block-based strategy game is reminiscent of ancient gallic Amiga title *Full Metal Planete*, based as it is on excavating energy-giving mineral resources in a desolate landscape whilst beating off the attentions of rival miners and unpleasant rock-based local wildlife and chromed, if somewhat inflatable, yellow faced Lego characters. A range of vehicles can be utilised, from Hoverboards to hulking LoaderDozers, all of which will be simultaneously available in the customary tactile 'toy' form at the time of the game's release.

LEGO RACERS

PUBLISHER: Lego Media RELEASE: October

The mind-expanding knobbly bricks of our youth make a digital return this autumn with a pair of games aimed at the youngest end of the PSX public. As well as Rock Raiders, there is also Lego Racers, a Mario Kart-esque romp through various themed landscapes (as featured in the toy set) including the Dark Forest, Moonie Moon, Tribal Island and so on, with each player driving a customisable vehicle they can design, build and modify at will in a garage beforehand, and with no risk of choking your pets or siblings to death on a tiny bit of plastic either.

iNFO STATION

USE THE FIGHTING FORCE, LUKE

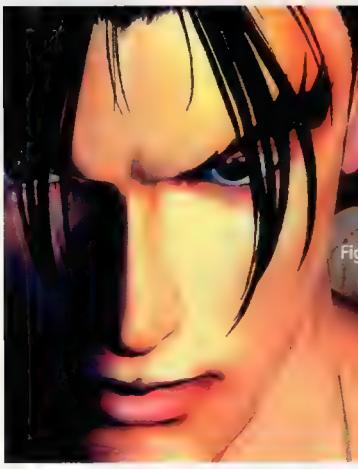
In a surprise move, Eidos has revealed a sequel to its limp *Double Dragon* clone *Fighting Force*. This time it will be a third-person snipe 'n' sneak, the wisdom of which is lost on us, as this all-new game could well do without the naff associations of its forebear.

THRIFT RACER 4

In a seeming response to disappointing initial sales, Virgin has daringly dropped the price of *Ridge Racer 4* to a bargain £29.99 within weeks of its release. The game has not been performing as well as was hoped, although no-one has yet followed suit.

STICK IT TO THE MAN

Despite, one assumes, a fleet of shark-like lawyers, Sony has again failed to prevent PSX emulation software from hitting the shelves, thanks to a Californian judge. The Bleem! company's PC program takes advantage of accelerator card technology to improve speed.



Tekken–Tag, You're It!

Ever fancied doubling up with your favourite Tekken characters?

It seems that the renewal and evolution of an existing licence is far more en vogue than making the effort to create new ideas and concepts. I'm all for apathy and sloth, but how many more Street Fighter incarnations can we truly tolerate before Capcom gets razed to the ground by irate gamers refusing to purchase Super-Turbo-Hyper Street Fighter Vs Hello Kitty-Turbo Version 3? Tekken is in danger of taking this path with the release of the Tekken Tag arcade machine, a sort of Tekken 3.5. As the moniker suggests, you are able to choose two characters to alternate between during bouts, executed by a simple button push and not a convoluted twirl of the joystick that can dislocate wrists. The tactical options are immense as you're able to begin a combo with one character, switch to your second fighter and continue with them. All characters from the series are featured, and plans also exist for a port to PlayStation/PlayStation 2. Just don't let on we told you, right?

USA TODAY

IT'S NOT GAMES THAT KILL

A group of parents have filed a second set of lawsuits against several major videogames companies, including Sony, Sega and Nintendo, following last December's dismissal of their first case.

The parents of Jessica James, Kayce Steger and Nicole Hadley – high school students killed by a contemporary now serving a life sentence without parole eligibility for 25 years – are blaming the producers of Doom, Quake and Mortal Kombat, along with one internet porn site and the makers of The Basketball Diaries. Although the killings took place in 1997, similar events recently are sure to fuel the debate as society looks for someone's door at which to place the blame for its own general failings.

TOCA Made Me Rich

Ever regret losing hours sat in front of the console? Not Katherine Legge.

▲ Anyone can game their way to fame and success... although it might not work with so well with Bust-A-Move.

The dissenters claim that excessive gameplay erodes the mind and gives one an altered view on reality. Surely, like myself, everybody begins their day by wearing tight shorts and killing wild beasts, followed by some disregard for speed limits in a stolen car, capped off with a violent fist fight with a random stranger, just like in the games. Eighteen year old Katherine Legge would agree with me, for she owes her Touring Car success to *TOCA 2*, using the realistic car physics and tracks as a tutor for the real thing. Katherine is one of only three female drivers in the MGF cup series, touring the country and achieving some favourable placings. Next time you get grief for your gaming, smugly reply that you could one day be a rapping dog or delirious bandicoot. With surgical help, naturally.

40 WINKS

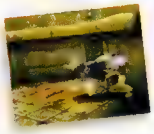
PUBLISHER: Eidos RELEASE: Autumn

I should warn you now that 40 Winks is a Mario-esque 3D cute 'em-up set puts dog to Playing as one of two [illegible] Ruff and Tumble (Awwww...). Your overall aim is to banish nightmares by harnessing the power of 40 Winks from the utterly nefarious NightKap. Set in the land of dreams, the potential for surreal antics is thankfully exploited, allowing your character to assume many alternate guises such as robots and ninjas. A two player co-operative mode is also in place, should you have any friends who wish to share this experience with you.

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

PUBLISHER: Universal Interactive RELEASE: Autumn

The object of many sordid fumblings in darkened bedrooms, Xena: Warrior Princess is about to flip and slash onto the PlayStation, possibly usurping Lara from his lofty perch. Many characters and monsters from the series will be present in the fray, with plenty of combat for sadists. Lucy Lawless herself was lecture mapped for the game, making those high-flying kicks even more erotic to the lucidly inept.



YOU HAVE CHOSEN OL' DIRTY BASTARD...

Jail-dodging goth-hop supremos Wu-Tang Clan are to star in their own fighting game! Longtime fans of kung-fu films and PlayStation beat 'em-ups (even immortalising *Soul Blade* SFX for posterity on their last sprawling album). The package will of course include exclusive tracks from the collective's sonic archive.

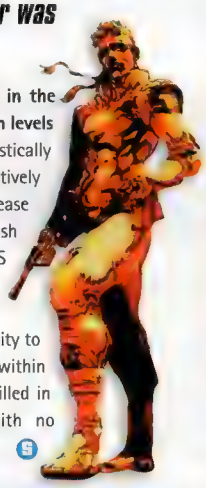
Hasbro Goes Gravedigging

Hasbro is looking to cash in on the nostalgia of today's mature gamer, and capture a new audience with stars of the past.

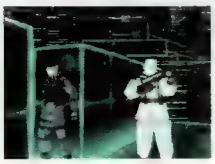
Hasbro Interactive announced it has signed an agreement with Namco to develop, publish, and distribute games based on 11 Namco properties, including Pac Man, Pole Position and Galaxian. It ties in with the company ethos of making classic games available to contemporary consumers, with the added endowment of PlayStation graphical might. The success with *Frogger* proves that Hasbro is certainly up to the monumental challenge of doing justice to these revered opuses. Although Hasbro currently only own the PC rights, the potential for PlayStation conversions is ripe. Sticking with the neo-retro theme, Namco are gearing up to unleash a 3D *Pac Man* game upon the masses, *Pac Man World*, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the ravenous yellow disc. Like a bad waiter serving wine in a restaurant, this game should be a corker.

My Name Is David

After repeated criticism that the game of the year was too short perhaps this is the answer.



Metal Gear Solid, the game that instigated revolution in the concept of games, brought characterisation to Dickensian levels and made Konami obscenely rich. So rich, in fact, they have altruistically decided to release a Metal Gear Solid expansion pack, tentatively entitled Metal Gear Solid Integral. Naturally, this release is to appease the needs of gamers worldwide and not to rake in even more cash from a tenuous tie-in, gracious no. Dedicated to enhance the MGS experience, the new CD will include around 300 new training modes, the option to play from a first-person perspective and the ability to randomise the placing of guards within the game proper. This title is stencilled in for a July release in Japan, with no European date set as yet.



URBAN CHAOS

PUBLISHER: Eidos Interactive RELEASE: September

Coming via developer Mucky Foot, this is a dark and foreboding arcade adventure set in a harsh future world that will combine elements of stealth, hand-to-hand combat and agile platforming. Intriguingly it seems it will be possible for your character's own shadow to give away your position, whilst a fully-realised weather system and the changing light from dawn through to dusk will signal the passing of time. It appears that only Eidos have the gumption to keep creating games in this tricky genre, and this could well prove interesting to the more discerning gamer.

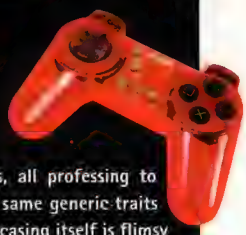
TECH BITS

ACTION REPLAY PROFESSIONAL

PRODUCED BY: Datel
PRICE: £39.99
RATING: There is none higher.

Finally, the option is available to hack into PlayStation game code and create your own custom cheats, via the Action Replay Professional. Essentially, you enter the numeric variable you want made infinite (say bullets or energy) and the cartridge searches the game code for the specific variable. It can take some time, but the results justify the effort. It can store thousands of codes, includes many already in the memory and has the virtual save capacity to store 120 game slots. It can even allow you to view FMV and listen to in-game music. The cartridge itself is a sturdy number, with a Giger aesthetic that will increase the charisma of your dull grey box.

SPEED PAD



PRODUCED BY: Logic 3
PRICE: £7.99
RATING: Cheap, functional second-rater.

The PlayStation is drowning in an ocean of Joypads, all professing to essentially the same merits. The Speed Pad boasts the same generic traits such as programmable auto-fire and slow-motion. The casing itself is flimsy and frivolous, with buttons that don't feel 'tight' enough during play and a slightly wonky control pad. The Start and Select buttons are also too close to the Slow button, making for occasional frustrations during play.

SOFTTOUCH PAD

PRODUCED BY: Wild Things
PRICE: £9.99
RATING: Smooth as Bryan Ferry.

Ergonomic pads seem to be very much in vogue this season, parading down the metaphorical catwalk of PlayStation grandeur. The Softtouch is a pad with a single gimmick, yet one that serves to elevate it above the tepid competition. The pad itself has an almost velvet-like sheen, making for soothing handling. it also copes well with the accumulating sweat from prolonged beat 'em-up sessions. It functions well as a pad also, with a slightly loose, yet responsive, D-pad and snappy buttons. The shoulder buttons could possibly be larger, but, at £9.99, it's no great failing.

PRO-SHOCK ARCADE

PRODUCED BY: Fire
PRICE: £29.99
RATING: The Grand Master of arcade realism.

Given the abundance of beat 'em-ups, it is a curious anomaly that there are so few arcade controllers available. Fire wants to rectify this and has given us the Pro-Shock Arcade, a thing of beauty in appearance and application. The body is sturdy, while the joystick is microswitched and highly responsive. A minor problem is that the buttons are not in the cross-key pattern, but it's still essential for the fighting connoiseur.

iNFO STATION

UNGAWA, CHEETAH!

Loin cloth fetishists take note as Sony has announced a game based around the erstwhile King of the Jungle to tie in with the Disney animated film, due this year. You control the greasy skinned Tarzan as he swings from vines etc., although later CPU Tarzan, you Jane.

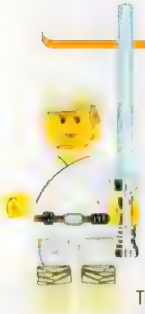
SOB, WAIL, SNIFFLE...

Fans of straining rubber will be gutted to learn that the astoundingly lovely Nell McAndrew will be hanging up her shorts and no longer stepping out as Lara Croft for the sexual amusement of male gamesplayers the world over. Luckily, one of her first projects after being released from her contract is rumoured to be posing nude for *Playboy*. Awooga! (a picture of the new Lara, Lara Weller, can be viewed on page 21 of this very issue of STATION.)

Ups and Downs

As usual it's been a month of zenith and nadir, like these for example.

Lightside



Our beloved Dazza's birthday, making him a humble 45. Or thereabouts if his constant whinging is anything to go by. Dazza loves Ribena, nuff said...

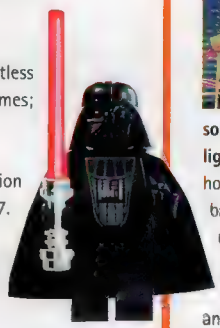
Ant's superb old skool *Star Wars* T-shirt collection. His infinite knowledge of *Star Wars* continues to astound us, as does his patience with Dazza.

The Dreamcast finally getting an official European release date. We're not plugging the competition, we're jubilant over the fact that Europe is being seen seriously by the gaming corporations

Star Wars Lego. It reminds us of our lost youths, building women from Meccano...

Dar'kside

Pamela Anderson having a reduction of her 'money-makers'. Dazza was inconsolable for weeks, still refusing to smile unless given beer.



The juvenile antics of the Trenchcoat Mafia doubtless leading to puritan revolts and heavy censorship of games; the Devil's tools, apparently.

Kendall's tenacious lust for *Ally McBeal*, not to mention Nick's psychedelic hair and misplaced adoration for L7.

Brett Anderson of Suede's failed attempts to act all cool like, gyrating instead like the corpse-hero, Dan Fortesque in medevil. Get some pubes, Brett.

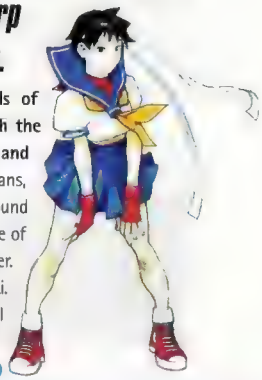
Ape Shall Not Kill Ape

While Charlton Heston is defending the Fourth Amendment, someone's monkeying with his image.

There's some hot simian news from Fox Interactive regarding a big-budget movie remake of The Planet of the Apes and a tie-in PlayStation game. Details are sketchy at the moment although some info is promised around the time of E3, while a conservative estimate for the game's arrival seems to be 'about this time next year'. All together now: 'Dr Zaes, Dr Zaes... oh oh, Dr Zaes'

Vomit On Ryu!

Here's a new twist for the future of the tie-in. There's also some sharp turns and an 80 foot drop.



Rollercoasters are malign tools of evil, twisting and speeding with the sole intent of inducing nausea and projectile vomiting in the weak and lightweight, potentially ruining dates and business meetings. Americans, however, seem to thrive on the near-death adrenaline rush of breaking the sound barrier in a small carriage. So much so, in fact, that they have united their love of rollercoasters and passion for games in the curious *Street Fighter* rollercoaster.

ZOOM! past Ryu, WHIZZ! over Ken and SPEED! loop-da-loop round Chun-Li. Colossal figures of all the major characters appear on the ride. This is all well and good, but we await the eventuality of the Lara rollercoaster, using her unnaturally undulating chest as an incline, not to mention the tunnel...

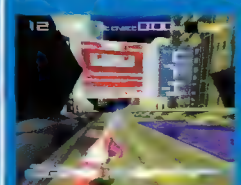
ATTACK OF THE SAUCERMEN

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis RELEASE: Late June

You play a non-cognitive cleaner called Ed who has been sent to Earth to clean up the mistakes of those in his tribe who have left a bit of a mess behind. Ed is the creature responsible for setting up the legendary Nazca crop circle, the X-Files and all the governmental cover-up stories on our planet. It is planned to play like Resident Evil without the violence or the horror, all delivered with Lemmy Kilmister in check.

WIPEOUT 3

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis RELEASE: Winter



The first shots of the supersonic future racer are here, and it seems the Sonaxx publishers haven't dicked around with the distinctive look of the game too badly. A dedicated split-screen option has been confirmed, which infers that there will be no serial cable option. The use of lasers is a welcome innovation, but let's hope the vital frame rate hobble is smoothed. New Tournament, Challenge and Stunts modes should also add dimension.

EIGHT INCHES OF PLEASURE

Merchandise once again extends its tendrils into the world of gaming, fleecing impressionable gamers for hard earned income. *Mortal Kombat* is the latest licence on the bandwagon, with a series of action figures based on the popular game characters.

TOKYO JOE

The 6th Tokyo Games Show occurred last month, although much of its thunder was well and truly stolen by Sony's PlayStation 2 fandango in the same city, a point emphasised by a complete absence of any reference to the year 2000 über-console anywhere. As this event was the last chance the Dreamcast has to hog the limelight it was featured heavily, although only the RPG *Shenmue* and the coin-oppy beat 'em-up *Power Stone* proved impressive. Sony instead drew attention to its present market dominance.

Dream No Longer

It's here... and about bloody time!

Sega, galvanised into action by Sony's PlayStation 2 announcements, has finally released details of the Dreamcast European launch. Despite a name like a deranged fisherman's fantasy, expectations are at fever pitch. Retailing at an overdraft-friendly £199, the last-best hope for Sega will be nestling on UK shelves on September 23rd. Sega is also promising ten 'top' titles for simultaneous release, including the inevitable Sonic Adventure and Virtua Fighter 3tb. Christmas will bring the release of twenty additional titles, including House Of The Dead 2 and a Cool Boarders port. With a considerable budget earmarked for European marketing, this is one event we can certainly expect a media frenzy from. To quote Poe: 'Is all that we see or seem but a dream within a dream'. Not if Sega have their way...

Shrinkwrapped Schoolgirls' Pants

OUR MONTHLY GAZE INTO THE JAPANESE PSYCHE

Hentai Strip Poker

As you can imagine, the noble game of poker has been corrupted once more. No longer a game played in smoky film-noir bars. Hentai Strip Poker makes you compete against anime girlies; all pouting lips and eyes as big as dinner plates. Naturally, the intent is to get them naked, via cunning play and sadistic bluffs against multiple opponents. The game interface is specifically designed to maximise one-handed play (NOTE: satire).

And The Beat Goes On...

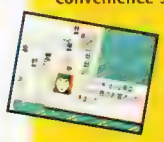
Tentative approval pending the actual outcome greets news from Konami that Beatmania will be retuned for European ears.

© Beatmania Image courtesy of MCV

Japanese coin-op favourite Beatmania is going to be completely re-vamped in time for its much-delayed November release, we can exclusively reveal. Konami are keen to replace the quirky yet strangely loveable tunes of the original with tracks that are more suited to western ears, with several big-name DJs potentially lined up for the task. We at STATION would like to suggest they employ the likes of Q-Bert, Kid Koala, Peanut Butter Wolf and Mixmaster Mike for the job, avoiding the alarming predilection seen lately for tasteless and mainstream house disc jockeys adding their name to a game (Alistair Whitehead on *Live Wire!*, Sasha on *WipEout 3*, the sinister Judge Jules on *MUSIC*) Keep it real, fellas...

The Convini

Japanese simulation games are eclectic to say the least. The Convini places you as the mogul in charge of a small convenience store. No dragons to fight, no multi-hit combos. All aspects are in your charge, from store layout, opening hours and profit margin. Strategy is called for in the sale of goods; ice creams in Winter, for example, being from the Ratner business school of stupidity. The game becomes territorial eventually, with you attempting to close down other convenience stores. Sadly, it lacks the option to call in 'da boyz' and silence all of the opposition.



Gremlin Hit By Gremlins

In-house politics mean long delays to Gremlin's release schedule.

Promising Gremlin racing sim Rallymasters is looking likely to be delayed for at least three months thanks to Infogrames' recent acquisition of the long-standing Sheffield codesmiths. Understandably, the French company wants the road clear for its own great white hope, *V-Rally 2*, set to arrive before the summer. This is unfortunate as *Rallymasters*' designer is Digital Illusions, creator of the horribly underrated journalist's favourite *Motorhead*, and by the looks of this screenshot it'll be rather smart.

Acclaim For The Future

Like medieval barons paying homage to their king, developers are swearing allegiance to Sony.

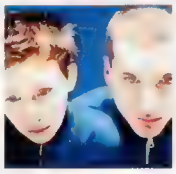
Acclaim has announced plans to 'take a leadership position' in its support for PlayStation 2. The recent announcements concerning the specific specifications of this Messiah-console have caused more than a ripple with producers and publishers alike. Companies have been scrabbling over each other to receive exclusive development kits and begin to pave the future of gaming. Acclaim has the utmost faith in Sony's paragon and is currently toiling on development tools to exploit the phenomenal power of PlayStation 2. Now the big industry players are getting in on the act, the success of PlayStation 2 seems even more inevitable.

NO MORE POLYGONS

And STATION is so much more than just another games mag. To prove it, every month we offer our opinion on just about every facet of culture that interests us. Read on for world beyond the polygon.

ALBUMS

TITLE: FEAR OF FOURS
ARTIST: Lamb
LABEL: Fontana **PRICE:** £12.95
RELEASED: Out now



Unjustifiably earmarked as Portishead wannabes at the time of their debut a few years back, this second album sees the duo's distinctive sound of fractious beats and twisted sister vocals covering new territory. Lou Rhodes baby-woman singing has lost the edge of melancholia heard before and now bubbles and squeaks with a full-bloodedness that proves less emotionally testing, but which thankfully lets the listener digest the album as a whole without fear of snapped heartstrings.

Her voice acts as a delicate foil to the snub-nosed junglistic beats supplied by skinhead instrumentalist Andy Barlow, whose rhythms combine serpentine complexity with an attacking ruffneck outlook whilst also demonstrating a delicate touch via a palette of warmly organic samples and synth tones that are reminiscent of unsung Ninja Tune hero Amon Tobin. Highlights include the bebop-bounce of the single 'B-line'; 'Little Things', a take-no-prisoners slice of stop-start breakbeat workout which demonstrates how Barlow could earn a tidy living making straight drum and bass tunes; and live favourite 'Ear Parcel', a joyous instrumental mash up of live double bass, squalling acid blarts and 'The Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy'. While some of the slower-paced numbers lack instant pep it's an accessible but still hard-to-pin-down collection of music that strikes a smart balance between sensitivity and energeticism. S

RATING: ✪✪✪✪

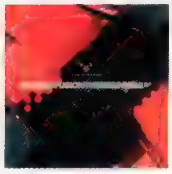
TITLE: THE ABLIST
ARTIST: Rob Swift
LABEL: Asphodel Records **PRICE:** £11.95
RELEASED: Out now

While mainstream hip hop (that's 'rap' to you wack suckas) spirals into an ever-deepening well of west coast playa smoothness and 'real music' values, the New York-centred underground arm continues to pathfind a route into new and unsignposted aural territories, based around the lost black art of scratching and other turntable wizardry. As Mr Swift's day job is as resident DJ for the criminally ignored X-ecutioners, this solo outing allows him to go deeper into the mysteries of brittle rhythms and scoured beat box funk than otherwise. Although Rob's vinyl skills may not quite match the free-jazz insanity of Q-Bert, his fiendishly accurate and flowing technique oozes classic b-boy stance.

The true experimentation comes in the form of 'All This Scratch Is Making Me Rich', which casts the Technics deck as an equal member of a live band, interplaying with jammed bass, drums and parping trumpet to groovy effect. Rob's versatility means that the album is of a more varied feel than some of his contemporaries' solo efforts, with tunes that are reminiscent of Wu-Tang, Cypress Hill and Company Flow without being tedious clones, all with top-notch guest rapping (best of which is a volcanic improvised rant down the telephone line from a pal languishing behind bars). Not as easily accessible for the non hip-ho-hed as the Jurassic 5 maybe, but still easy-going enough for non-specialists. S

RATING: ✪✪✪✪

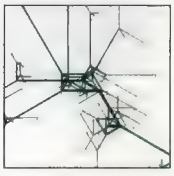
TITLE: MOVING FUSION: THE BEGINNING EP
ARTIST: Moving Fusion
LABEL: RAM Records **PRICE:** £8.99
RELEASED: Out now



While not enjoying the same media profile as The Virus Crew, RAM Records has been determinedly evolving an equally confrontational sound that builds new defences on the foundations of techstep. Moving Fusion are arguably their most valuable players, an assertion reinforced by this fierce mini-album of tearing techno-jungle. 'The Beginning' is like being ordered to the dancefloor at gunpoint; all relentless bass jabs, scorched earth beats and laser guided drones. New rhythmic patterns are increasingly rare in drum and bass, but 'Combat' bravely moves on from the acute straight-snare drums that currently hold sway and twists them through a Möbius strip, creating something which isn't danceable in the accepted sense of the word, like funk for droids. 'Brainstorm' is more trad, all angry bee riffage and back-breaking breaks, while the fetchingly titled 'Sex Drive' is the tune that Chef would put on his stereo if he was about to bed a laydee and had just licked off a rock of crack, sounding akin to the soundtrack to some techno-fetishist porn film. The final track, 'Turbulence', is a maelstrom of schizophrenic mechanical whirring ensnared by a rigorous beat that tries valiantly to keep it all tied down. Only the catchy bass line offers any respite, but inevitably the paranoid soundscape keeps eats away at the movement-friendly rhythm it lurks beneath. S

RATING: ✪✪✪✪✪

TITLE: EP7
ARTIST: Autechre
LABEL: Warp Records **PRICE:** £13.99
RELEASED: Out now



Autechre have been described as being like two little boys endlessly moulding sound like Play-Doh, creating essentially useless but oddly attractive music that serves no practical purpose for many, but acts as a kind of aural gym for those with unusual taste. This collection of eleven tracks sees them return to form after some patchy recent efforts, with their trademark industrial-electro underpinnings overlayed by a mélange of lo-fi abstractive tones that texturise rather than fill the spaces between the beats.

Listening to the tunes seems a strangely tactile, almost synaesthetic experience that suggests to me how blind people must perceive the world of touch, all monochromatics and temperature rather than shades and colour. What melody there is tends to follow scales and musical rules designed for some kind of triple-eared Venusian who counts in binary, at times almost Fisher Price in its random simplicity but then seconds later sounding like it belongs in some twenty-minutes-into-the-future cathedral. Like any kind of non-representative art it's not for everybody, and accusations of up-own-arsedness are never far away, but auteurs such as these are the subconscious of mainstream (and most underground) music, pioneering techniques that appear through seepage in less unashamedly experimental forms. S

RATING: ✪✪✪✪

ALBUM REVIEWS: (106) FEAR OF FOURS – LAMB (106) THE ABLIST – ROB SWIFT (106) THE BEGINNING EP – MOVING FUSION (106) EP7 – AUTECHRE BOOK REVIEW: (107) ENERGY FLASH – PICADOR
WEB SITE REVIEW: (107) '...' ATE MY BALLS TOY REVIEWS: (107) EVEL KNIEVEL'S STUNT CYCLE INTERVIEW & LIVE MUSIC REVIEW: (108) FREDDY FRESH – THE TIMEPIECE, EXETER TOY REVIEW: (108) STAR WARS LEGO
TOY REVIEWS: (109) TEKKEN KEYRINGS DVD REVIEWS: (109) DRILLER KILLER – VISUAL FILM (109) THE AVENGERS – WARNER BROS DVD (109) DICK TRACY – TOUCHSTONE DVD (109) A PERFECT MURDER – WARNER BROS DVD
FOOD REVIEW: (109) NESTLE KIT-KAT CHUNKY

BOOKS

TITLE: ENERGY FLASH
AUTHOR: Simon Reynolds
FORMAT: Softback **PUBLISHED BY:** Picador
PRICE: £12.99 **RELEASED:** Out now

While there have been an increasing number of books examining dance culture from either a purely sociological viewpoint or as pieces of hedonistic fiction, an overview of the entire entity that encompasses the fine details of the music, rituals of the scene and the inevitable chemicals has been sorely lacking. Beginning far before what many would perceive as the starting point of the UK rave/acid house scene, Reynolds examines its genealogy back past the obvious historical reference points such as the Chicago and Detroit based pioneers and Kraftwerk, drawing historical analogies with the rise and fall of consumerist mod culture especially.

While these oft-studied and undeniably important periods are comprehensively covered, the author really starts to hit his stride when deconstructing and examining the less obviously canonical and 'worthy' arms of dance music. These include thrash-core Gabba techno, the terminally unfashionable cheese-hungry ghetto of happy hardcore and the various strands of militantly underground jungle that mutate too fast and with so many difficult to detect nuances that most music journalists literally cannot keep up as the style sub-divides relentlessly. His lyrical text pulls no intellectual punches but always remains poetically chewy and readable, while the only recurrent sticking point comes in his unfair misinterpretation of Future Sound of London and a clutch of other unashamedly high-brow acts who make no secret of their more conceptual leanings, an attitude Reynolds is ironically highly suspicious of. While the hedonistic side of rave inevitably gets all the negative and reactionary press, this book will act as a source of intellectual reassurance for those who find themselves thinking a bit too hard on the dancefloor (and as an added bonus a full-length CD is included with twelve tracks of unsung classic tunes that would be nigh on impossible to find elsewhere).

RATING: ★★★★★

SITE OF THE MONTH

SITE: '...' ATE MY BALLS
ADDRESS: Various

▲ **Just two of the many, many examples on offer from the Yahoo server. The balls were put into motion by Mr T, who reportedly was the first to ingest.**

Not a single website per se, but an ever-expanding collection of pages added to by like-thinking individuals as and when they see fit. The basic premise is the adding of comedy value to a vast range of unsuspecting celebrity individuals by the simple insertion of the phrase '...ate my balls' in a speech bubble alongside a characteristic phrase. On paper it probably sounds distinctly underwhelming, but seen in anger it's a near-unlimited source of merriment for bored journalists and their ilk. Targets have spanned from the initial 'Mr T Ate My Balls' site that started it all, through to 'Beastie Boys Ate My Balls', 'Kate Winslet Ate My Balls', 'He-Man Ate My Balls' and strangely enough, 'Iowa Class Battleships Ate My Balls'. A full run-down can be found at: http://dir.yahoo.com/Entertainment/Humor_Jokes_and_Fun/Tasteless_Humor/Ate_My_Balls/

RATING: ★★★

TOYS

NAME: EVEL KNIEVEL'S STUNT CYCLE
PRODUCED BY: Playing Mantis
PRICE: See website for details **RELEASED:** Out now

Those of you under twenty years of age probably won't recognise this, one of the most ass-kicking toys in all of history, namely Evel Knievel's legendary Stunt Cycle. The prohibitively powerful wind-up motor inside the bike could propel the fearless injection-moulded Evel to amazing feats of daredevil riding, with family pets, younger siblings and brave Action Men all common objects for the white-suited hero to leap over. Now the Playing Mantis company in the US is reviving the Stunt Cycle, albeit with a few unnecessary colour changes that separate it from the original. Whether it will become commercially available over here remains to be seen, but for now those wishing to re-live their misspent youth can order one at www.playingmantis.com/evelknievel.

RATING: ★★★

FRESH JIVE TALKING

STATION were fortunate enough to catch up with Mr Fresh backstage. We couldn't resist the opportunity to talk about music, rednecks, PlayStations (of course) and even Jennifer Aniston.

S: Evening Freddy! Do you play the PlayStation, and have you been offered any PlayStation soundtrack work as is the fashion currently?

F: I play my son's, and no, I've only been doing a couple of movie soundtracks but I'd love to given the chance.

S: How do you feel the US hip hop scene differs from the UK?

F: America is wrapped up in the Puff Daddy corporation mafioso commercial machine, but they're starting to get hip to stuff that's around like Norman (Fatboy Slim), whose music is in five films and countless adverts and even being played on Minneapolis radio – which is amazing.

S: Do you think you're a musical misfit?

F: Well I've been around and know the score 'cos I'm 36 not 24, but I'm still a new kid on the block as far as England is concerned. I've done 120 records but most people think I've done four, but that doesn't bother me 'cos I love my music and I'm having fun.

S: Where do you feel sample-based music is going?

F: Well, whereas I used to play with electronic synthesisers, now I'll just go through crates and crates of old party tunes, records from the forties and fifties, how to be a ventriloquist records, polka anthems, ridiculous records. I don't want to just go to a Commodores album and sample; for example, the horns in 'Badder Badder Schwing' are from a ridiculous source, not a famous artist.

S: How did you end up so eclectic?

F: What does eclectic mean? Like all over the place? Well I have been specialised in different styles: I was The Modulator, Nitrate with the Air Liquide Posse, amongst many others. There's times as well when I just do techno parties in Germany and Holland. I DJ'ed in 28 countries before I came to England doing real electronic music, but lately I've been getting back into the funkier hip hop style of my roots, and if you listen to the breaks they're just the same but sped up. My wife is Puerto Rican and that's why I have quite a lot of salsa influences in my music. I like so many styles of music that when I'm playing and a crowd is getting into my set I'll just freak out and play anything, but if I play a club in Galway, Ireland and they wanna hear house music I'll be glad to play it, there's no point getting up your own ass, saying f**k you and force-feeding them it, they've paid to have a good time and party, after all. I mean I'm from Minnesota, and playing the music I liked there would cause the rednecks to shout 'F**king nigger music!', so I'd put on some country and western music with Marley Marl underneath and they'd be dancing to hip hop and not even know it.

S: And finally, who would you prefer, Princess Leia in her gold bikini, or Jennifer Aniston dressed as Princess Leia?

F: It has to be Princess Leia doesn't it? She's pretty nice... S

LIVE MUSIC

ARTIST: FREDDY FRESH
DATE: 15th April
VENUE: The Timepiece, Exeter

Exeter's only credible nightspot, the Timepiece, is chock full of students tonight, all desperately trying to spend their fresh new grant cheques on alcohol and ensuingly get off with one another. A primed crowd then, ready for a bit of a dose of the raucous jumping-about-music provided by Minnesota's funkiest white man, Freddy Fresh.

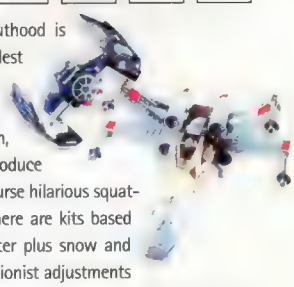
A long-time influence on Norman 'Fatboy' Cook, his genre-striding set revolves around a solid hip-hop axis twinned with the sixties-tinged guitar lines that have been a recurring element of Big Beat™ since its inception. Whilst not becoming too demanding a test for the ears, the beats are undeniably movement-friendly, although over the course of a two-hour set the number of real emotional peaks and troughs were scant, but the crowd were uncaring of such nit-picking. Highlights included Freddy's own new tracks plus an inspired bootleg hybrid of the vocal from 'Rockafella Skank' meshed with the guitar line from the Rolling Stone's 'Satisfaction' that infringed any number of heavyweight copyrights but rocked da partee big style. S

RATING: ★★★

TOYS

NAME: STAR WARS LEGO
PRODUCED BY: Lego **RELEASED:** Out Now
PRICE: £16 and upwards.

Combining two of our favourite things from youthood is always a good thing, particularly when it's the Coolest Thing Ever™ (*Star Wars*, naturally) amalgamated with the worthy constructivism of Lego. In what can only be described as the ultimate licence to print money situation, the Danish brickmeisters have nabbed the rights to produce re-buildable versions of the films' vehicles, plus of course hilarious squat-limbed figures based around Luke, Darth et al. There are kits based upon X- and Y-Wing Fighters, Vader's TIE Fighter plus snow and landspeeders, all completely open to your revisionist adjustments (two seater speeder bike, anyone?) although it does seems almost sacrilegious to gleefully deform George's original visions. It's all smart kit but the big question for us is: when will a dog-sized Lego AT-AT become available? S

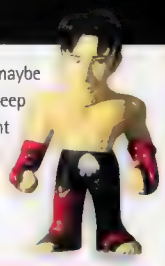


RATING: ★★★★

TOYS

NAME: TEKKEN KEY RINGS
PRODUCED BY: Namco **RELEASED:** Out Now
PRICE: Call Project K (0181 508 1328)

If your once-trendy *Teletubbies* keyring is starting to look a bit battered by now maybe you should invest in one of these loveable super-deformed *Tekken* characters to keep your door-opening equipment neat and tidy. All your favourite sluggers are present (apart from the hidden fighters alas), and they're all as cute as a proverbial button, and are bound impress any games literate young lady or gent you flash them to. S



RATING: ★★★★

DVD

TITLE: THE DRILLER KILLER
DISTRIBUTOR: Visual Film
PRICE: Rental Only

The most notorious of the video nasties, spawning the public hysteria that brought the 1984 video recording act into force, Abel Ferrara's The Driller Killer is at last available in the nation's video stores.

Having been successfully embargoed under the Obscene Publication Act, the 15 year ban has been at long last overturned, allowing the public to look beyond the hype and judge this sleazy classic for themselves. Although shorn of a few seconds, by the scissors of the censor, the impact of the shocking violence and the almost evocative dark tone remains undiminished.

In a manner similar to Visual's early ex-nasty *Possession*, once viewed the 'video nasty' mantle seems strangely ill-fitting. This tale of a struggling artist's decent into madness aspires to more art house leanings than out-and-out gut crunching. The rough edge production values give The Driller Killer a surreal documentary feel, which is uncompromising in its intense atmosphere and bursts of blood letting.

Re-mastered with the welcome inclusion of six minutes of additional footage, fans of cult cinema have been denied this landmark film for far too long. S

RATING: ★★★★★

TITLE: DICK TRACEY
DISTRIBUTOR: TOUCHSTONE DVD
PRICE: £15.99

Inspired by the success of the Bat, in the early '90s each major studio went in search of a comic book character to add a few zeros to their bank balance. Emerging from the flood, Warren Beatty's Dick Tracy drew up a deserving second to the Dark Knight. A cult hit, the lush colour and tongue-in-cheek acts of the leads – including a masterful turn from a heavily made-up Al Pacino – captured the look and the feel of its inked origins. The lightweight plot is more frivolous than the dark undertone of *Batman*, but remains enjoyable. Even the overblown Madonna fits the general tone.

The bizarre 1920s world of mobsters is lavishly brought to life by the rich colours and inventive set design, showcased upon this crisp DVD transfer. The lack of additional features is disappointing, yet those seeking some time wasting fun, look no further. S

RATING: ★★★

TITLE: THE AVENGERS
DISTRIBUTOR: WARNER BROS DVD
PRICE: £15.99

Universally reviled and a box-office disaster, one has to wonder to which level of badness the big screen reworking of the camp TV show The Avengers aspires to obtain. Although a little lacking in structure this is probably due to the rumoured 30 minutes of plot which ended up on the cutting room floor after poor test screenings, leaving the movie with an uneven narrative. Yet among the lavish sets and inventive visual touches the viewer will discover a movie of many merits.

Fans of the small screen counterpart will relish in the awfully Britishness of the dialogue and the utterly overblown performance of Sean Connery, taking a rare villainous role. The much published lack of chemistry between the two leads, Ralph Fiennes and Uma Thurman, seems a little unjust, the two working with the established characters, whilst managing to add their own personality to the roles.

Hardly a classic, but still a highly enjoyable piece of utter nonsense that will stay with the viewer long after such successful dross as *Armageddon* and *Lethal Weapon 4* have vanished from memory. S

RATING: ★★

TITLE: A PERFECT MURDER
DISTRIBUTOR: WARNER BROS DVD
PRICE: £15.99

Andrew (The Fugitive) Davis' remake of Alfred Hitchcock's Dial M For Murder, A Perfect Murder seemed destined for failure since its inception, but somehow avoids inadequacy. Well, almost.

Based on one of Hitchcock's weakest movies, it follows a jealous husband, played in fine form by Michael Douglas, who attempts to murder his cheating wife, a tear invoking performance from Oscar hugger Gwyneth Paltrow. Sympathy is directed toward the female lead, but due to Paltrow's shiftless handling of the role, one cheers on Douglas, and thus finds final reel disappointment. Thanks to the constant twists, though, the tension and suspense mask the acting flaws – the narrative is enthralling until the naff ending, but thankfully this DVD includes an alternative finale more in keeping with the script. S

RATING: ★★

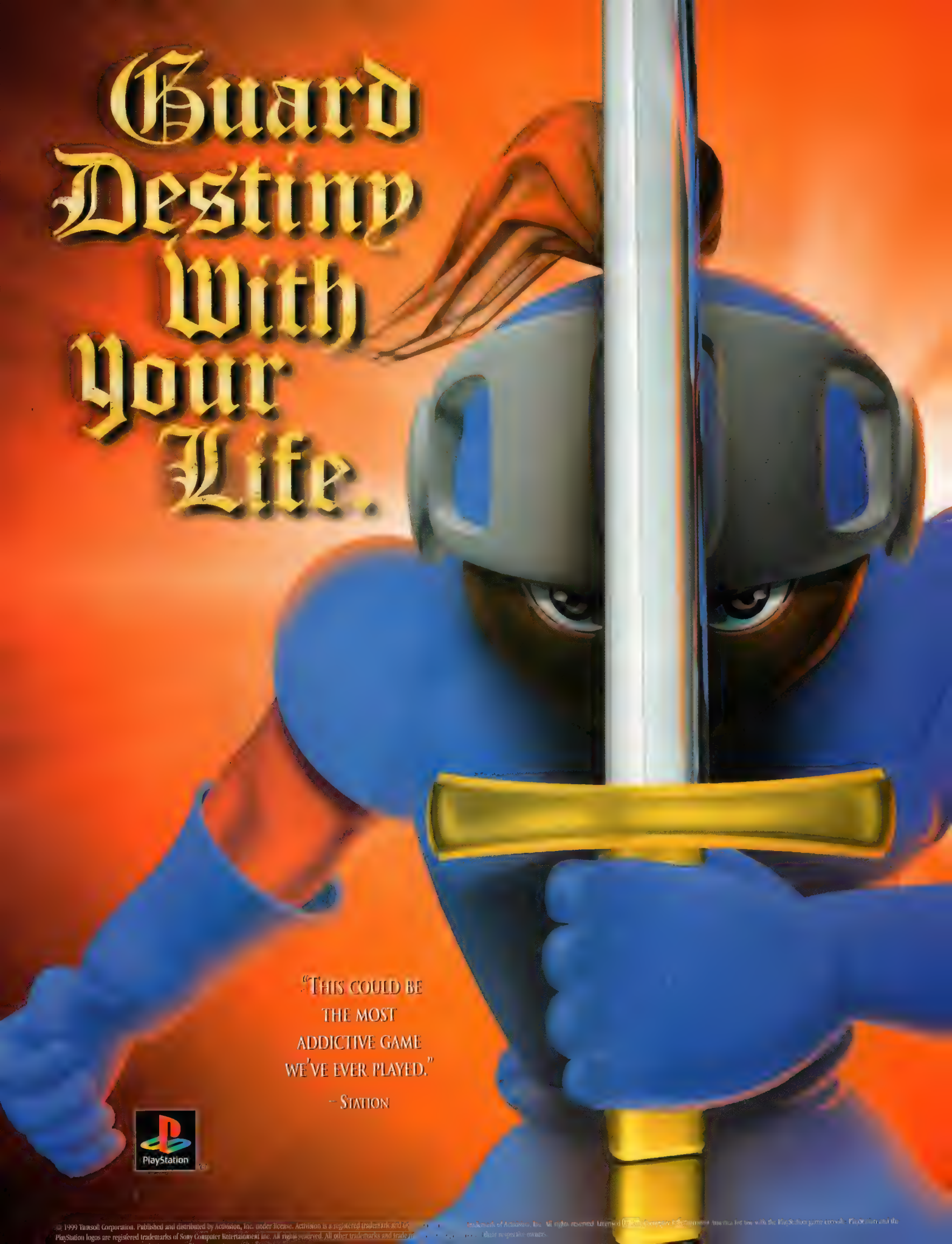
FOOD OF THE MONTH

NAME: KIT KAT CHUNKY
MANUFACTURER: Rowntree
PRICE: £0.36

Continuing the trend for adjusting the sacred variables of confectionery make up is this mammoth super-Kit Kat that melds the traditional four slim fingers into one huge John Holmes-sized stick. This simple act utterly transforms the feel of the bar, changing it from a reasonably dainty accompaniment for tea into a hulking rival to the traditional cocoa hardman, the Yorkie. The gauge of chocolate coating is particularly impressive, measuring in at a phat 4mm whilst the larger mass of wafer running down the spine of the bar add gravitas to a once flippant sweety. A giant single-barrelled Twix can't be too far off, we'd imagine. S

▲ A perennial favourite has morphed into an entirely new form of beast.

RATING: ★★★★



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Inside

PlayStation business news for the more discerning gamer

Inside Index: [page 112] Accolade for Infogrames – No more Yaroze – More supermarket to stock games [page 113] Sony Corp. profits down – Titus get into Interplay

INFOGRAMES

An Accolade for Infogrames

The major player in the French marketplace remains nonplussed and still expanding.

Infogrames go from strength to strength with their latest acquisition, Accolade. This will give them popular licences such as the successful *Test Drive* franchise, as well as forthcoming releases like the highly anticipated *Demolition Racer*, a destruction driving game featuring a number of different cars to annihilate.

It is not yet known if they will still use the Accolade name, as when Infogrames obtained Ocean they continued to release games under the old moniker. Whatever the name the merger makes them a major force in the software market.

ACCOLADE

A Pound Of Apples And A PlayStation Please

More supermarkets jump on the videogame retail bandwagon, as Safeway and Tesco enter the fray.

Following Sainsburys' plans for selling console products in larger stores, Safeway have now joined the list of supermarkets to stock games. The initial scheme will see stores selling the full price PlayStation top ten, as well as the top 20 Platinum titles. It is expected that more stock will appear in these outlets later in the year as the Christmas push begins. Tesco already stock PlayStation titles in their bigger stores and if the Safeway plan proves successful expect other supermarket chains to follow their lead.

Yaroze Dies

The home development kit that spawned, amongst other things, a sheep dog sim, has finally run out of steam. We wait for Yaroze 2000.

Sony has announced that there will be no more Net Yaroze systems released, meaning the end of the infamous black PlayStation. The Yaroze is a home development kit allowing a PSX to link up with a PC, permitting the amateur programmer to design their own games. Over 2,000 Yarozes have been sold in the UK and existing users are assured of continued support from the Net Yaroze development program. Yaroze cannot be deemed a failure however, essentially it has simply sold out as all the machines were created in one go and the line then discontinued, with 10,000 consoles churned out on a single production line.

NET YAROZE™

Prism Deal With Sunsoft

A change of distributors could herald in a new era for Sunsoft, as Prism look to be the best for the small players.

Prism Leisure will now exclusively distribute Sunsoft titles in the United Kingdom. Future Sunsoft titles include *Monster Seed* and *Hard Edge*. Previously it was the job of Infogrames to distribute Sunsoft games but Anthony Gray, Sunsoft's development manager comments 'We felt that Prism were more compatible with our needs as a small publisher. Prism is looking into working more closely with publishers and we're pleased to be a part of what they are doing'.

Titus The Titan?

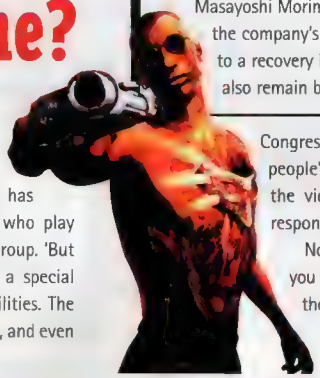
Long used to staring over the Atlantic for the movers and shakers in the gaming world, it appears interesting things are afoot closer to home...

French publisher Titus has revealed its plan to become a major worldwide force, starting its campaign by securing a major chunk of Interplay. Titus has secured a $10 million stake and has an option to acquire up to 34% within the next six months. The overall plan is to take full control of Interplay. Stock in Titus out performed all other shares on the Paris Bourse last year, rising by over 300%. CEO Herve Caen commented that 'Titus intends to become a top ten worldwide publisher in terms of revenue. We're not an investment company, we've acquired a significant part of Interplay and it is a strategic move, not pure investment. We hope it's the first step in something bigger'. He revealed that the plan is to become a $500 million company in the next five years.

Then Who IS To Blame?

Amidst the inevitable witch hunt following more schoolyard shootings, one group appears to be talking sense.

In the wake of insinuations that videogames somehow played a part in the horrific Colorado shootings, an Anti-Violence Gaming Community has been launched. 'The Anti-Violence Gaming (AVGC) is a list of people who play videogames that know the difference between fiction and real-life' said the group. 'But there is more to the AVGC than just that. The keyword "community" has a special meaning, as gamers we share a common thread and respect each other's abilities. The goal is to educate everyone about that difference, especially the media, parents, and even Congress. Everyone here at the AVGC believes that responsibility for people's actions lies within themselves and their upbringing, not the videogame companies. It is not the videogame companies responsibility to raise your child and teach them morality.'



No charges will be brought against videogame producers, of that you can be sure. Hopefully it will be because people understand the existentialist arguments of the AVGC, but more than likely it will be because they can afford to hire the best lawyers.

Lend Sony A Dime

Sony record a global situation similar to that reported in issue seven for the US and Japan. The PlayStation, however, remains buoyant.

Despite the continued success of PlayStation, Sony Corporation's profits decreased by almost 20 percent in the last business year, due to economic deficiencies in emerging markets and pricing wars for key products. Although sales of PlayStation consoles increased to 21.6 million units, over ten percent higher than the year before, the parent company confirmed today it had amassed a consolidated net profit of 179 billion yen, or $1.5 billion, for the year ended March 31st, which was a record 222 billion yen, or $1.9 billion, lower than the same figure for the previous year.

'For the time being, we just have to grin and bear it', Sony senior vice president Masayoshi Morimoto told a news conference, before going on to promise that the company's restructuring plans announced last month would contribute to a recovery in the electronics sector in the near future. The future should also remain bright with the arrival next year of the PlayStation 2.

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pager
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playstation
call 0906 960 2285
guess who?
psx driving seat
call 0906 960 2286
20 CDs
call 0906 960 2289
win games!
zelda
call 0906 960 2290
tombraider 3
call 0906 960 2291
duke nukem
call 0906 960 2292
tekken 3
call 0906 960 2293
mission impossible
call 0906 960 2294
spyro the dragon
call 0906 960 2295
1080° snowboarding
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call 0906 960 2297
colony wars
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call 0906 960 2299
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CHARTS AND PRICE WATCH

timepiece

LUCY AVENT, 18, STUDENT

DO MORE CLUBS NEED CONSOLES?
Definitely. Gives you a break from dancing.

DREAM GAME SOUNDTRACK?
Lamb, they're diverse and evocative.

WHAT GAME CHARACTER WOULD YOU INVENT?
Something with speed... a cheetah.

HANNAH CASPER, 18, STUDENT

DO MORE CLUBS NEED CONSOLES?
Sure, you need something else to do when the music stinks.

DREAM GAME SOUNDTRACK?
Fatboy Slim, 'cos Big Beat rocks.

WHAT GAME CHARACTER WOULD YOU INVENT?
A rhino, so it could skewer people.

VICKY CONIBERE, 18, STUDENT

DO MORE CLUBS NEED CONSOLES?
Yes, it keeps the atmosphere alive.

DREAM GAME SOUNDTRACK?
Fatboy Slim would work really well.

WHAT GAME CHARACTER WOULD YOU INVENT?
Pop-whizz; a zoo-thing with a great name.

This month our fearless reporters went further afield than the local software emporium for an insight into the public's gaming habits and braved interrogating the seriously drunken clientele of our local disco the Timepiece during a recent appearance from DJ supremo Freddy Fresh (see No More Polygons). Choosing, for some reason, predominantly tipsy ladies Nick approached those playing the club's in-house PlayStations (showing *Soul Blade*, *Rapid Racer* and *Actua Soccer 2*) and pumped them thoroughly for information.

PRICE CHECK

Leading the offers on Ridge Racer Type 4 is Electronics Boutique, which is offering the game bundled with a Mad Catz wheel for £69.98, a saving of £25.

When the game is purchased in MVC, it comes with a £5 voucher redeemable against the upcoming Gran Turismo 2 or Driver. MVC also offers a selection of games available at £40 for three, including WipEout 2097, Alien Trilogy, Pitfall and the classic PaRappa the Rapper. Finally at MVC, a memory card is available for 99p with any game over £20.

Virgin has a buy-one-get-one-free promotion for £29.99, with titles such as Akuji The Heartless, Colony Wars and Mortal Kombat Trilogy, and also sell recent hit Rollcage for the bargain price of £29.99. Special deals in Dixons are Wild 9 and Batman And Robin, both discounted to £19.99.

Lastly, WH Smiths is giving away a £5 gift voucher to every purchaser of Gex, Civilization II or Viva Football and HMV is giving away a memory card with selected titles.

PLAYSTATION TOP TEN GAMES

CHART TRACK

1. RIDGE RACER TYPE 4 – Namco
2. FIFA '99 – EA
3. METAL GEAR SOLID – Konami
4. RUGRATS: SEARCH FOR REPTAR – THQ
5. TOMB RAIDER II (PLAT.) – Eidos
6. GRAND THEFT AUTO (PLAT.) – Take Two
7. TOCA 2 TOURING CARS – Codemasters
8. A BUG'S LIFE – Disney/Sony
9. CRASH BANDICOOT 2 (PLAT.) – Sony
10. UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – Eidos

BLOCKBUSTER RENTAL

1. RIDGE RACER TYPE 4 – Namco
2. METAL GEAR SOLID – Konami
3. CRASH BANDICOOT 2 (PLAT.) – Sony
4. UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – Eidos
5. WARZONE 2100 – Eidos
6. RUGRATS: SEARCH FOR REPTAR – THQ
7. TOMB RAIDER III – Eidos
8. GRAND THEFT AUTO (PLAT.) – Take Two
9. A BUG'S LIFE – Disney/Sony
10. TOMB RAIDER II (PLAT.) – Eidos

ELECTRONICS BOUTIQUE

1. RIDGE RACER TYPE 4 – Namco
2. METAL GEAR SOLID – Konami
3. RUGRATS: SEARCH FOR REPTAR – THQ
4. CIVILIZATION II – Activision
5. FIFA '99 – EA
6. UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – Eidos
7. WARZONE 2100 – Eidos
8. PREMIER MANAGER '99 – Gremlin
9. TOMB RAIDER III – Eidos
10. A BUG'S LIFE – Disney/Sony

INDEPENDENT CHARTS

1. RIDGE RACER TYPE 4 – Namco
2. FIFA '99 – EA
3. A BUG'S LIFE – Disney/Sony
4. TOMB RAIDER II (PLAT.) – Eidos
5. CRASH BANDICOOT 2 (PLAT.) – Sony
6. METAL GEAR SOLID – Konami
7. PREMIER MANAGER '99 – Gremlin
8. GRAND THEFT AUTO (PLAT.) – Take Two
9. UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – Eidos
10. RUGRATS: SEARCH FOR REPTAR – THQ

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